



Lawrence · Douglas County  
**PUBLIC HEALTH**  
Advancing Health for All



**NEWS RELEASE**  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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**Douglas County Health Officer prohibits public gatherings of 10-plus people**  
*Order also closes restaurants, bars, clubs and movie theaters to public through April 1*

**LAWRENCE** – Douglas County Health Officer Dr. Thomas Marcellino on March 18 prohibited public gatherings in the county of more than 10 people until April 1 to help stem the COVID-19 disease outbreak. Marcellino also ordered from March 19 to April 1 closure of restaurants, dining facilities, bars, taverns, night clubs and movie theaters.

Marcellino said the action is a proactive social distancing measure, as Douglas County as of 3 p.m. Wednesday, March 18, had one confirmed COVID-19 case, and national health officials expect more cases in coming days across the country.

“It is incredibly important during this time for people to limit their gatherings to less than 10 people as we try to flatten the curve of the spread of this virus and for people to avoid non-essential community engagement and non-essential trips out of their homes,” he said.

The order restricts indoor and outdoor gatherings of more than 10 people, except for governmental and judicial functions, healthcare facilities, private business operations, religious and faith-based activities, weddings and funerals. Marcellino noted that many governmental organizations and faith-based organizations in the county have already enacted practices including closing or limiting services to limit crowds.

The order closes restaurants, dining facilities, bars, taverns, night clubs and movie theaters, except that restaurants can continue to provide carryout, drive-through and delivery services of food and beverages during this time. This is in line with recent orders from health officers in neighboring counties, including in Johnson and Wyandotte counties.

“We want to limit environments where people have a greater chance of congregating in a crowd of more than 10 people,” Marcellino said. “We appreciate the work and cooperation of all business owners as we seek to work together to limit the spread of the virus and especially protect those who might be most vulnerable.”

Lawrence-Douglas County Public Health encourages everyone, if they must venture into public, to follow universal CDC guidelines on social distancing practices, including maintaining at least six feet from others.

In addition to the new order, the Health Officer has also strongly recommended:

- People avoid non-essential trips and stay home to the extent they can.
- Daycare centers to close.
- Retirement communities and long-term care centers limit visitors.

Public Health has worked closely on these decisions with numerous community partners, including Douglas County Government, City of Lawrence, Douglas County Emergency Management and LMH Health.

Douglas County residents can also stay informed as information changes frequently. For general information visit [www.cdc.gov/COVID19](http://www.cdc.gov/COVID19) or [LDCHealth.org/Coronavirus](http://LDCHealth.org/Coronavirus). Call the KDHE phone bank at 1-866-534-3463 (1-866-KDHEINF) Monday – Friday, 8 a.m.–5 p.m., email [COVID-19@ks.gov](mailto:COVID-19@ks.gov) or Lawrence-Douglas County Public Health’s information line at 785-856-4343 or email [info@ldchealth.org](mailto:info@ldchealth.org).

#### **About Lawrence-Douglas County Public Health**

Nationally accredited Lawrence-Douglas County Public Health has served the Lawrence and Douglas County community for more than 130 years. Its mission is to advance policies, practices and programs that promote health for all, prevent disease and protect the environment.

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