



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Douglas County health order to close bars beginning Friday, July 3

Increase in recent COVID-19 cases tied to bar environments, will reassess decision in two weeks

LAWRENCE – After a recent spike in COVID-19 cases, Douglas County’s local health officer will issue a new order to close bars and nightclubs in the county beginning Friday, July 3, for the next two weeks.

“We have seen a rise of cases among younger adults, and these cases are now being linked to higher-risk older adults in our community. We have to slow down the spread of the coronavirus in Douglas County to prevent a surge of cases,” said Douglas County’s Local Health Officer Dr. Thomas Marcellino. “It is our hope that taking these measures now will allow us to slow the spread and put us into a stronger position as we approach the school season.”

Through 3 p.m., July 1, Douglas County has 190 COVID-19 cases (92 individuals have recovered) since its first lab-confirmed case on March 17, but 66 of the new cases have come since June 26. As of Wednesday morning, LMH Health had one inpatient positive for COVID-19, but members of the county’s COVID-19 Recovery Coordination Team are increasingly cautious about a potential surge of patients given the recent increase in cases.

Marcellino said the county would issue an official health order on Thursday to include the local bar closing decision and to align with a forthcoming announcement by Gov. Laura Kelly on her recommendation for which reopening phase counties should align with given the recent increase in cases across the state. Douglas County has issued a local health order that took effect Wednesday that [requires people to wear masks](#) in all indoor public spaces where six feet of separation is not possible, and for consistency, the county plans to align with the Governor’s statewide mask executive order expected to be published Thursday.

“Across the country and here locally, COVID-19 cases are climbing. It is clear that bars are a high-risk environment for the spread of COVID-19,” Marcellino said. “Locally, we have seen a surge of cases linked to bars. Infectious disease and public health experts around the country are recommending the closure of bars.”

The local order will close bars and nightclubs beginning Friday, excluding operating curbside and carryout services of beverages to be consumed at home and not on the bar’s premises, which was put into effect earlier this year under an executive order.

Anyone with questions about compliance of a public health order can email phorders@ldchealth.org, where LDCPH staff will follow up on specific complaints.

“It is clear mask usage slows the spread of the virus. Wear a mask at all times if six feet of distance cannot be assured,” Marcellino said. “We appreciate the public’s cooperation. We are all in this together.”

Other important ways to reduce transmission of COVID-19 are:

- Practice social distancing, staying at least 6 feet apart from others when in public or outdoors;
- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer when soap and water is not immediately available;
- Cover coughs and sneezes with your elbow and avoid touching your face;
- Keep your home and office surfaces clean;
- Stay home as much as possible and keep your circle of contacts small.

Anyone in need of a cloth mask for personal use can submit [this form](#), where the United Way of Douglas County will try to provide you with one. Pick up is Monday and Thursdays from 12-2 p.m. at the United Way, 1307 Massachusetts St.

Lawrence-Douglas County Public Health maintains the Coronavirus hotline, 785-856-4343, and there are [options in the community for COVID-19 screening and testing](#). Always call a healthcare provider to let them know of your symptoms before showing up.

Members of the public can also check douglascountyks.org/coronavirus or ldchealth.org/coronavirus for information about COVID-19 in Douglas County.