

For Immediate Release:
May 27, 2020

Local Health Officer Crystal VanHoutan has announced today that Jefferson County is transitioning from emergency response to a new risk management phase as the Governor's office returns principal oversight of COVID-19 crisis to the counties. At her May 26, 2020 press conference, the Governor Laura Kelly announced that statewide orders imposing business closures will not be extended under her new emergency declaration effective at midnight on May 27, 2020.

Jefferson County Health Officials will not impose additional limits, based on the current conditions in Jefferson County. Jefferson County will strongly recommend that Jefferson County residents and businesses continue following the guidance of the Ad Astra plan, which can be found at www.covid.ks.gov.

Effective on the 27th day of May 2020, Jefferson County Health Officials recommend moving Jefferson County to Phase 3 of the Ad Astra plan. This is sooner than the Governor's recommendations of earliest timeframe of June 8th but is based upon current local county data.

1. The new recommendation will increase the Mass Gathering size to 45.
 - Mass gatherings are defined as instances in which individuals are in one location and are unable to maintain a 6-foot distance between individuals (not including individuals who reside together) with only infrequent or incidental moments of closer proximity.
2. All education, activities, venues and establishments may operate and should follow all public health guidelines.
3. High- Risk individuals may resume public interactions with caution but should practice physical distancing and minimize exposure to social settings when precautionary measures may be difficult.

Effective on the 1st day of June 2020 Jefferson County Courthouse/ County offices will be open to the public.

The Health Department Clinic operates on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 8:00-4:00. At this time clinic will continue by appointment. The doors will be open for all other business. Please call 785-403-0025 for questions or appointments.

The Sheriff's Department lobby will be open for services, but inmate visitation will still be prohibited until further notice.

As the state economy begins to reopen, Jefferson County officials will continue to monitor existing cases within the county as well as activities with greater risk of disease spread. We know that COVID-19 continues to circulate in our county and state, and we must continue to take precautions as the restrictions loosen. Jefferson County citizens are urged to remain vigilant to control the spread of COVID-19 by continuing to practice social distancing and following all CDC guidance.

- Put distance between yourself and other people outside of your home- 6 feet of social distance
 - Remember that some people without symptoms may be able to spread the virus
 - Avoid crowded places and mass gatherings
 - If you are at higher risk for developing complications from COVID-19- it is especially important that you maintain distance from others.

- Wash hands often
 - Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds especially after you have been in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing
 - If soap and water are not available, use hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
 - Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

- Cover your mouth and nose with a cloth face cover when out in public and unable to social distance
 - Cloth face masks should not be placed on young children under the age of 2, anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unable to remove the mask without assistance.
 - The cloth face mask is meant to protect other people in case you are infected.
 - Continue to keep about 6 feet between yourself and others. The cloth face mask is not a substitute for social distancing.

“While no new health orders are being issued today, county officials and I will continue to work with community organizations to ensure adequate resources are available for risk mitigation,” VanHoutan said. “We will evaluate the need for any new local health orders in the event of any new isolated outbreaks.”
