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Gov. Pritzker Announces New Mitigation Plan to Prevent Resurgence of COVID-19 in Illinois as State Surpasses Two Million Tests

New Plan Outlines General and Industry-Specific COVID-19 Mitigation Efforts for the State's 11 Emergency Medical Services Regions

CHICAGO – Governor Pritzker and Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) Director Dr. Ngozi Ezike today announced a new COVID-19 mitigation plan focused on combating a resurgence of cases while maintaining the progress the state has made towards bending the curve over the last four months. As states across the country experience a surge of new COVID-19 cases, Illinois remains an outlier with lower hospitalization and infection rates and one of the highest rates of testing in the U.S.

The resurgence plan recognizes that the state is in its strongest position to combat the virus since the pandemic began, with a robust testing operation regularly yielding more than 30,000 tests per day, expanded tracing operations with 1,450 contact tracers, a growing stockpile of personal protective equipment, and hospital surge capacity. The plan also accounts for months of additional data and research as public health experts reach a greater scientific understanding of this virus and how it spreads.

"Illinois now has the lowest infection rates among all our neighboring states and one of the lowest positivity rates in the country – and it's because of the individual actions of millions of our residents," **said Governor JB Pritzker.** "Opening up our economy does not have to come with a spike in cases. Other countries have done it successfully while reducing cases and infection rates. But that requires vigilance on the part of all of us. It's imperative that individuals, families, workers and businesses follow the recommendations doctors have given about vital mitigations and that we act quickly if we see any outbreaks and upticks, signs that could lead to a surge of coronavirus infections."

"This plan ensures we are looking at all available data to make timely decisions to protect the health of our communities," **said IDPH Director Dr. Ngozi Ezike**. "By assessing key metrics that indicate both the disease burden and the capacity of each COVID-19 region to respond, we can then take targeted actions within specific regions to help mitigate the spread of this deadly disease while keeping as much of our state open as possible."

The resurgence prevention plan developed by IDPH outlines three tiers of general and industry-specific mitigations that can be acted upon to prevent a renewed spread of COVID-19. To provide for a more granular approach, the mitigations outlined will be applied on a regional basis based on the 11 Emergency Medical Services (EMS) regions that have traditionally guided IDPH in its statewide public health work.

METRICS AND MITIGATIONS

The administration has relied on science and data to guide its approach to battling COVID-19 from the very beginning and will continue to do so when determining the metrics and mitigations necessary to prevent a resurgence of cases in Illinois.

The following metrics will be used to determine when the spread of the virus in a region requires additional mitigations:

- Sustained increase in 7-day rolling average (7 out of 10 days) in the positivity rate and one of the following severity indicators:
    - Sustained 7-day increase in hospital admissions for a COVID-19 like illness
    - Reduction in hospital capacity threatening surge capabilities (ICU capacity or medical/surgical beds < 20%)
- OR three consecutive days averaging ≥ 8% positivity rate

The updated guidance from IDPH establishes three tiers of mitigations that can be implemented should a region meet the resurgence metrics.

Some mitigation strategies in higher risk settings, like indoor bars and restaurants, will be automatically applied in a region that meets resurgence criteria to prevent rapid spread of COVID-19. A larger list of mitigation strategies relating to settings like retail, fitness, and salons and personal care will be available if testing and contact tracing data at the local level indicate those mitigations to be prudent.

The list of optional measures included in the updated guidance is not exhaustive. Other industries could require additional mitigation if indicated by the region's data.

PLAN REGIONS

Mitigations will be applied on a regional basis based on the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Regions that have traditionally guided IDPH in its statewide public health work. Expanding to 11 regions allows for a more granular approach in this phase of the

response to COVID-19. The new regions follow county lines to account for counties that are in more than one region of the EMS system.

The new regions are:

1. **NORTH:** Boone, Carroll, DeKalb, Jo Daviess, Lee, Ogle, Stephenson, Whiteside, Winnebago
2. **NORTH-CENTRAL:** Bureau, Fulton, Grundy, Henderson, Henry, Kendall, Knox, La Salle, Livingston, Marshall, McDonough, McLean, Mercer, Peoria, Putnam, Rock Island, Stark, Tazewell, Warren, Woodford
3. **WEST-CENTRAL:** Adams, Brown, Calhoun, Cass, Christian, Greene, Hancock, Jersey, Logan, Macoupin, Mason, Mason, Menard, Montgomery, Morgan, Pike, Sangamon, Schuyler, Scott
4. **METRO EAST:** Bond, Clinton, Madison, Monroe, Randolph, St. Clair, Washington
5. **SOUTHERN:** Alexander, Edwards, Franklin, Gallatin, Hamilton, Hardin, Jackson, Jefferson, Johnson, Marion, Massac, Perry, Pope, Pulaski, Saline, Union, Wabash, Wayne, White, Williamson
6. **EAST-CENTRAL:** Champaign, Clark, Clay, Coles, Crawford, Cumberland, De Witt, Douglas, Edgar, Effingham, Fayette, Ford, Iroquois, Jasper, Lawrence, Macon, Moultrie, Piatt, Richland, Shelby, Vermillion
7. **SOUTH SUBURBAN:** Kankakee, Will
8. **WEST SUBURBAN:** DuPage, Kane
9. **NORTH SUBURBAN:** Lake, McHenry
10. **SUBURBAN COOK:** Suburban Cook
11. **CHICAGO:** City of Chicago

A map of the resurgence plan regions will be available on the state's coronavirus website: www.coronavirus.illinois.gov.

COVID-19 TESTING AND TRACING

Since March, the Pritzker administration has implemented policies and programming to reduce the spread of COVID-19. Measures have included issuing a stay at home order to prevent hospitals from becoming overwhelmed, expanding the state's contact tracing program, and building upon testing availability across Illinois.

The administration has been proactive in expanding testing access since the onset of the pandemic. Illinois was the first state to establish COVID-19 testing capabilities to reduce reliance on the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). Today, the state is currently experiencing a weekly average of more than 33,000 tests per day, recently surpassing 2 million tests total. This expanded testing programming contributed to a significant decrease in the state's seven-day rolling average positivity rate, now averaging just over 3.0 percent.

The state has also worked to expand its contact tracing operation, with approximately 1,450 contact tracers now working across Illinois. Over the next week, 26 local health

departments will receive additional funding from the state, representing over $127 million of available grant funds for contact tracing. With these funds, local health departments will hire approximately 1,330 contact tracers over the next few months and significantly expand their contact tracing efforts.

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