

Governor Hutchinson's Actions & Updates Regarding COVID-19

Thursday, November 19, 2020

Governor Asa Hutchinson issued a press release today to announce a directive from the Arkansas Department of Health that restaurants, bars and private clubs with "on-premise" permits must close at 11 p.m. The directive is effective Friday, November 20, 2020, and remains in effect through January 3, 2021.

"In an effort to reduce the spread of the virus as a result of prolonged social interaction in group settings, I am accepting the recommendation of the COVID-19 Winter Task Force to require bars, restaurants and clubs that sell alcohol for consumption in their establishment to close at 11 p.m.," Governor Hutchinson said in the press release. "This is a balanced approach that is limited and targeted as we work to reduce new COVID cases in our state." Read the full press release, which includes the ADH directive, here: <https://bit.ly/3fjU3tZ>.

Friday, November 13, 2020 (Press Conference)

At a press conference on Friday, November 13, Governor Asa Hutchinson issued Executive Order 20-50 (<https://bit.ly/32UURR3>) to Establish the Governor's COVID-19 Winter Task Force. Per the press release:

"We continue to see a record number of COVID-19 cases, and as winter approaches, we must take this head-on with a strategy that is medically sound and data-driven," Governor Hutchinson said at a news conference today. "This will ensure that we are combating COVID-19 with the best resources to limit the spread and mitigate the impact of the virus while we wait for a vaccine."

- Governor Hutchinson will serve as chair, and Dr. Greg Bledsoe, Arkansas Surgeon General, will serve as vice chair. The other members of the COVID-19 Winter Task Force are:
 - Larry Shackelford, President and CEO of Washington Regional Medical Center
 - Chris Barber, President and CEO of St. Bernard's Healthcare
 - Scott Street, CEO of Medical Center of South Arkansas
 - Dr. Cam Patterson, Chancellor of the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences
 - Rachel Bunch, Executive Director of Arkansas Health Care Association
 - Bo Ryall, President and CEO of Arkansas Hospital Association
 - Troy Wells, President and CEO of Baptist Health
 - Ryan Gehrig, President of Mercy Hospital, Fort Smith
 - Major General Kendall Penn, Adjutant General, Arkansas National Guard
 - A.J. Gary, Director of Arkansas Department of Emergency Management
 - Dr. José Romero, Secretary of Arkansas Department of Health
 - Dr. Jerrilyn Jones, Arkansas Department of Health
 - Dr. Jennifer Dillaha, Arkansas Department of Health
 - Dr. Naveen Patil, Arkansas Department of Health
 - Dr. Keyur Vyas, University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences
 - Phillip Gilmore, CEO of Ashley County Medical Center
 - Dr. Steven Collier, CEO of ARcare
 - Ron Peterson, President and CEO of Baxter County Regional Medical Center
 - Additional citizens as the Governor deems necessary

Tuesday, November 10, 2020 (Press Conference)

At his weekly press conference on Tuesday, November 10, Governor Asa Hutchinson announced “Holiday Guidance During the COVID-19 Pandemic.” The document, which can be viewed here (<https://bit.ly/3kNO2qR>), includes general considerations for Arkansans, as well as guidance for places of worship and service/civic organizations.

Tuesday, November 3, 2020 (Press Conference)

At his weekly press conference on Tuesday, November 3, Governor Asa Hutchinson announced his “Strategy for Preventing the Spread of COVID-19 This Winter.” Per the ADH directive:

There is a strong desire to return to normalcy as the weather cools and the holiday season approaches. However, the threat of COVID-19 remains real and may even be heightened as outdoor activities become less feasible. It's critical that Arkansans take steps that will protect the people around them in the coming months.

Each of the steps outlined below offers protection against spreading the virus, but each one alone is not enough. We need to take multiple precautions to limit the spread of COVID-19 so we can make it through this season as safely as possible. Using all of these strategies together can significantly decrease the spread of the virus and keep each of us and our loved ones healthy and safe.

- The winter strategy includes the following actions:
 - Masking
 - Social Distancing
 - Testing
 - Contact Tracing
 - Compliance Checks
 - Get a Flu Shot
 - Stay Vigilant to Stop the Virus
- Read the full strategy here: <https://bit.ly/3kX5LNm>.

Tuesday, October 13, 2020 (Press Conference)

At his press conference on Tuesday, October 13, Governor Asa Hutchinson announced Executive Order 20-48 (<https://bit.ly/37O7pNv>) for the Purpose of Renewing the Disaster and Public Health Emergency to Mitigate the Spread and Impact of COVID-19.

- Per the order, the declaration remains in effect for 60 days.
- The order also states that several orders will remain in effect until EO 20-48 expires or is renewed, including those listed below.

Friday, August 14, 2020 (Press Conference)

At his press conference on Friday, August 14, Governor Asa Hutchinson announced Executive Order 20-45 (<https://bit.ly/3ay9GM4>) for the Purpose of Renewing the Disaster and Public Health Emergency to Mitigate the Spread and Impact of COVID-19.

- Per the order, the declaration remains in effect for 60 days.

- Additionally, the following executive orders are adopted and incorporated herein, as if set out word for word, and shall remain in effect until the expiration of this order or its renewal:
 - Executive Order 20-05, regarding telehealth;
 - Executive Order 20-06, extended by Executive Order 20-16, regarding the suspension of rules and statutes by state agencies;
 - Executive Order 20-14, regarding the suspension of in-person witnessing and notarization of legal documents;
 - Executive Order 20-15, regarding suspension of prohibitions for banks and corporations to hold shareholder meetings solely or partially by remote communication;
 - Executive Order 20-18 and Executive Order 20-34, regarding access to healthcare resources;
 - Executive Order 20-22 and Executive Order 20-35, regarding Workers' Compensation protections;
 - Executive Order 20-33, regarding the protection of businesses from liability related to COVID-19;
 - Executive Order 20-43 regarding the issuance of a face covering directive by the Arkansas Department of Health; and
 - Executive Order 20-44 regarding state and federal elections.

- All public and private gatherings of any number of people occurring outside a single household or living unit shall adhere to applicable directives or guidelines issued by the Secretary of Health.

- All businesses, manufacturers, construction companies, long term care facilities, medical and dental providers, community and school-sponsored team sports, and places of worship shall adhere to applicable directives or guidelines issued by the Secretary of Health.

- K-12 schools and extracurricular activities shall adhere to the applicable directives or guidelines of the Secretary of Education or Secretary of Health.

- The Secretary of Health may issue orders of isolation and quarantine as necessary and appropriate to control the spread of COVID-19 in Arkansas, and the Secretary of Health, in consultation with the Governor, shall have sole authority over all instances of quarantine, isolation, and restrictions on commerce and travel throughout the state. Cities and counties shall not impose any restriction of commerce or travel that is more restrictive than a directive or guideline issued by the Secretary of Health, in consultation with the Governor.

- A state of emergency continues, and a regional emergency is declared pursuant to 49 C.F.R. Section 390.23, as applied to commercial vehicles transporting essential items of commerce during this emergency, including but not limited to, groceries, pharmacy items, medical equipment, goods, commodities, fuel, poultry, and livestock.

Friday, August 7, 2020 (Press Conference)

At his press conference on Friday, August 7, Governor Asa Hutchinson announced Executive Order 20-44 (<https://bit.ly/322YCCU>) for the Purpose of Holding State and Federal Elections in the State While Following Social Distancing Guidelines Associated with COVID-19. Per the press release issued by the governor's office:

Governor Asa Hutchinson issued an executive order today that allows Arkansans to vote absentee if they are concerned that voting in person may be a risk to their health or the health of others because of COVID-19. Executive Order 20-44 also allows elections officials to start processing the absentee ballots a week earlier than usual to allow for an anticipated increase in the number of absentee voters. He issued the executive order in response to an official request from the Arkansas Association of County Clerks.

“This order affirms Secretary of State John Thurston’s position that the fear of exposure to COVID-19 or of exposing others at the polls is reason enough for a voter to cast an absentee ballot,” Governor Hutchinson said. “If a significant number of voters chooses that option, elections officials could be overwhelmed. We’ve already seen a significant increase in the number of applications for absentee ballots. This executive order builds in extra time for them to process and authenticate absentee ballots to ensure an accurate count and a fair election.”

The additional number of days for processing ballots will coincide with the 15-day early voting period. During that time, elections officials will be allowed to process only the registration information from the outer envelopes of an absentee ballot. By Arkansas law, they will not be permitted to open the ballots and count absentee votes until 8:30 a.m. election day. The deadlines for applying for an absentee ballot and submitting a completed ballot remain the same.

The application for absentee ballots and the deadlines are available on the Secretary of State’s [website](#).

Thursday, July 16, 2020 (Press Conference)

- At his press conference on Thursday, July 16, Governor Asa Hutchinson announced Executive Order 20-43 (<https://bit.ly/32pqUZV>) for the Purpose of Requiring Face Coverings. **The order will go into effect on Monday, July 20.** An accompanying directive from the Arkansas Department of Health will be issued as well. Per Executive Order 20-43:
- The Secretary of Health shall issue a public health directive requiring every person in Arkansas to wear a face covering over the mouth and nose in all indoor environments where they are exposed to non-household members and distancing of six (6) feet or more cannot be assured and in all outdoor settings where there is exposure to non-household members, unless there exists ample space of six (6) feet or more to practice physical distancing. The following shall be exempt from wearing a face covering:
 - Persons younger than 10 years of age;
 - Persons with a medical condition or disability that prevents wearing a face covering;
 - Persons performing job duties where a six (6) feet distance is not achievable, but a mask is inhibitory to the ability to safely and effectively perform the job duty;
 - Persons participating in athletic activities where a six (6) feet distance is not achievable, but a mask is inhibitory to the activity;
 - Persons consuming food or drink;

- Persons driving alone or with passengers from the driver's household;
- Persons receiving services that require access to the face for security, surveillance, or other purposes may temporarily remove a face covering while receiving those services;
- Persons voting, assisting voters, serving as poll watchers, or actively performing election administration duties; however, face coverings are strongly encouraged;
- Persons engaged in religious worship activities; however, face coverings are strongly encouraged;
- Persons giving a speech or performance for broadcast or to an audience; however, those persons shall safely distance from nearby individuals;
- Persons in counties where the Department of Health has certified that risk of community transmission of COVID-19 is low. To be considered low risk, the county must not have a newly identified case of COVID-19 for twenty-eight (28) consecutive days, assuming there has been adequate testing in the county.
- Executive Orders of the Governor issued pursuant Ark. Code Ann. §§ 12-75-101, et seq., have the force and effect of law. Additionally, pursuant to Ark. Code Ann. § 20-7-101, violation of a directive from the Secretary of Health during this public health emergency is a misdemeanor offense, and upon conviction thereof is punishable by a fine of not less than one hundred dollars (\$100) nor more than five hundred dollars (\$500).
- Law enforcement and local officials have the authority and are encouraged to enforce this directive.
- First-time violators of this order shall receive a verbal or written warning.
- Violators of this order under 18 years of age shall only receive a verbal or written warning.
- No law enforcement officer or local official may detain, arrest or confine in jail any person for violation of this order.
- This order shall not prohibit law enforcement officers or local officials from enforcing trespassing laws or other applicable laws in removing violators at the request of businesses or other property owners.
- Cities and counties may issue local ordinances consistent with this order.
- Cities shall not impose any measure that is in conflict with a directive or guideline issued by the Secretary of Health, in consultation with the Governor.
- The provisions of this order shall supersede those contained Executive Order 20-41; however, nothing in this order shall invalidate any ordinance passed pursuant to EO 20-41.
- This order shall automatically expire upon termination of the current emergency.

Thursday, July 3, 2020 (Press Conference)

- At his press conference on Thursday, July 3, Governor Asa Hutchinson announced that cities and towns across the state may implement an ordinance requiring mandatory face coverings to help curb the spread of COVID-19 by signing Executive Order 20-41 (<https://bit.ly/3ebiWWy>) for the Purpose of Clarifying Local Response to COVID-19. Per the press release:

“This provides a local option for cities to give them more flexibility if they have a community in which they might have a surge in cases. This model ordinance,

from the Municipal League, provides a consistency in approach across the state,” Governor Hutchinson said.

- This executive order allows for:
 - Local law enforcement and other city officials to enforce the use of face coverings upon the business' premises in accordance with public health guidelines.
 - Local law enforcement and other city officials to act in a support capacity, through enforcement, to educate and encourage members of the public who decline to wear a face covering about the efficacy of wearing such coverings.
 - Local law enforcement and other city officials to assist in enforcement through education of individuals who decline to comply with the face covering requirement of any local business that the individual must abide by the local business' mandate or leave the premises.
- Municipal League General Counsel John Wilkerson said, “Consistency is incredibly important and that is why this model ordinance says that the city is going to require the usage of masks in accordance with the guidelines of the Department of Health.”
- The ordinance can be found on the League’s COVID-19 Resources page <https://www.arml.org/resources/covid-19/>.

Thursday, June 18, 2020 (Press Conference)

- At his press conference on Thursday, June 18, Governor Asa Hutchinson announced Executive Order 20-37 to Renew the Disaster and Public Health Emergency to Mitigate the Spread and Impact of COVID-19. The executive order extends the current state of emergency, set to expire on Friday, June 19, for another 60 days. Read the full order here: <https://bit.ly/3fEksSf>.

Monday, June 15, 2020 (Press Conference)

- At his press conference on Monday, June 15, Governor Asa Hutchinson announced three new executive orders related to COVID-19.
 - **Executive Order 20-33 for the Purpose of Protecting Arkansas Businesses from Liability Related to COVID-19:** “To protect businesses that open or remain open during the COVID- 19 emergency, all persons in the State of Arkansas and the person’s employees, agents, and officers shall be immune from civil liability for damages or injuries caused by or resulting from exposure of an individual to COVID-19 on the premises owned or operated by those persons or during any activity managed by those persons.”
 - Read the full order here: <https://bit.ly/2UM7VUH>.
 - **Executive Order 20-34 for the Purpose of Ensuring Access to Healthcare Resources to Treat COVID-19:** “As part of the State’s response to the COVID-19 public health emergency and pursuant to the Declaration of the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services under the Public Readiness and Emergency Preparedness Act, 42 U.S.C. 247d-6d, that was published in the Federal Register on March 17, 2020, I hereby authorize all health care providers

who are licensed, certified, or otherwise authorized by law to administer health care in this State, and any partnership, association, corporation or other facility or institution that employs or contracts with such health care providers to provide healthcare services in their normal course of business or operation ("Healthcare Providers"), for the purpose of diagnosing, treating, mitigating, or curing COVID-19 or any complication therefrom, to use any drug, device, or product approved or cleared under the Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act (21 U.S.C. §§ 301-392) ("FD&C Act"); licensed under the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. §§ 201-291n); or authorized for emergency use under an Investigational Device Exemption or Investigational Drug Application of the FD&C Act."

- Read the full order here: <https://bit.ly/3hApEZ6>.
- **Executive Order 20-35 for the Purpose of Clarifying Workers' Compensation Law:** "(1) The intent of this order is to clarify and provide sufficient recourse under the Workers' Compensation Law, Ark. Code Ann. §§ 11-9-101 et seq., for employees to receive workers' compensation benefits during the COVID-19 public health emergency. (2) For the purposes of the exclusivity of rights and remedies under the Workers' Compensation Law in Ark. Code Ann. § 11-9-105, requiring an employee to perform work when the employer has knowledge that, within the normal course and scope of the employee's job performance, exposure to severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) or to coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) or to any other disease, health condition, or threat caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) or by any virus mutating from severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) is possible or likely is not intentional conduct that would remove the employer from the protections of the Workers' Compensation Law, § 11-9-101 et seq."
 - Read the full order here: <https://bit.ly/2Y5hsbx>.
- Additionally, reopening directives for Phase Two have been posted.
 - Business Limitations: <https://bit.ly/3foE6S6>
 - Elective Dental Services: <https://bit.ly/2URBwMy>
 - Restaurant Dine-In Operations: <https://bit.ly/2Y4T0XO>
 - Gyms, Fitness Centers, Athletic Clubs & Weight Rooms: <https://bit.ly/2AzmEvE>
 - Casinos: <https://bit.ly/3e8KsVt>
 - Barber Shops, Body Art Establishments, Cosmetology Establishments, Massage Therapy Clinics/Spas, and Medical Spas: <https://bit.ly/3fvIwGO>
 - Bar or Club Operations: <https://bit.ly/30P3H2O>
 - Large Outdoor Venues: <https://bit.ly/37BQqvJ>
 - Large Indoor Venues: <https://bit.ly/37wZEtc>
 - For both indoor and outdoor venues: To submit an increased capacity proposal to ADH for agriculture-related events (rodeos, fairs, livestock shows, etc.), please click [HERE](#), all other proposals click [HERE](#).

Wednesday, June 10, 2020 (Press Conference)

- At his press conference on Wednesday, June 10, Governor Asa Hutchinson announced that Arkansas would move into Phase Two of reopening on Monday, June 15.
- Specific guidelines and/or directives have not yet been issued.

Friday, May 29, 2020 (Press Conference)

- At his press conference on Friday, May 29, Governor Asa Hutchinson issued Executive Order 20-28 (<https://bit.ly/3eFoSle>) to establish the COVID-19 Technical Advisory Board. The board will review and evaluate new technologies as the state's public health agencies develop strategies for testing and contact tracing. Per the press release:

“Two of the most critical tools in our ongoing efforts to stop COVID-19 are testing and finding those who have had contact with someone who is sick or who has tested positive,” the governor said. “The technology for those tasks is changing rapidly. This advisory board will review options to ensure that we are employing the best tools that will allow us to quickly mitigate the spread of the coronavirus.”

- Governor Hutchinson appointed Dr. Austin Porter III as chair of the COVID-19 Technical Advisory Board. Dr. Porter is the Deputy Chief Science Officer at the Arkansas Department of Health.
- The Governor's other appointees to the COVID-19 Technical Advisory Board are:
 - Nolan Leatherwood, Interim Chief Information Security Officer, Arkansas Department of Information Systems.
 - Donald McCormick, Epidemiologist, Arkansas Department of Health.
 - Jim Carter, Chief Information Officer, Arkansas Department of Health.
 - Adita Karkera, Deputy State Chief Data Officer, Arkansas Department of Information Systems.
 - Dr. Michael Cima, Chief Epidemiologist and Associate Director for Science, Arkansas Department of Health.
 - Dr. Mandana Rezaeiahari, Assistant Professor of Health Policy and Management, Fay W. Boozman College of Public Health, University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences.
 - Dr. Kevin Sexton, Co-Director of Healthcare Analytics, Institute of Digital Health and Innovation; Associate Chief Clinical Informatics Officer for Innovation, Research, and Entrepreneurship; Assistant Professor, Department of Surgery, Biomedical Informatics and Health Policy Management, University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences.
 - Jennifer Davis, Chief Privacy Officer, Arkansas Department of Information Systems.
 - Anne Santifer, Director, Office of Health Information Technology, Arkansas Department of Health.
 - Kim Gardner, Arkansas Department of Human Services.
 - Clark Cogbill, Arkansas Economic Development Commission, Department of Commerce.
- Click here to read the full press release: <https://bit.ly/2TYpXCZ>.

Thursday, May 21, 2020 (Press Conference)

- At his press conference on Thursday, May 21, Governor Hutchinson announced that restrictions for summer residential camps and community and school-sponsored team sports are being lifted and these events will be allowed to occur per ADH guidelines.
 - **Summer Camps (Effective May 21):** The directive issued by Secretary of Health Dr. Nate Smith states that camp counselors may arrive for training no earlier than May 24, and that campers may arrive no earlier than May 31. That directive, which includes guidelines for screenings, daily activities, hygiene, sleeping and shower arrangements, medical plans, meal services and more, can be accessed here: <https://bit.ly/2TvkCTv>.
 - **Community and School-Sponsored Sports (Effective June 1):** The directive issued by Secretary of Health Dr. Nate Smith provides requirements for lifting limitations to community based and school-sponsored team sports through a phased approach for all ages of athletes. Each phase has a set of General Requirements that apply across all team sports with specific requirements applied based on the nature of the contact required by the rules or conditions of the sport. The directive does not include intercollegiate athletic team sports. Due to potential spread of COVID-19 through playing of wind instruments, marching bands are prohibited at this time. Read the full directive here: <https://bit.ly/2TISdJR>.

Monday, May 18, 2020 (Press Conference)

- At his press conference on Monday, May 18, Governor Hutchinson announced reopening dates for bars. Bars housed within restaurants are allowed to operate beginning **Tuesday, May 19**. Stand-alone bars will be allowed to resume operations on **Tuesday, May 26**.
- The ADH issued a revised directive for in-house restaurant operations to include requirements for those bars. The Phase One requirements are as follows:
 - Bars housed within restaurants are now allowed to operate, effective May 19, 2020, so long as physical distancing of 6 feet between individuals is maintained.
 - Entertainment operations within restaurants (such as live music, in-seat gaming or arcades) are permitted, effective May 19, 2020. Entertainment involving performers, such as live music or singing, shall follow these requirements:
 - The performers or players must be separated from the audience by at least 12 feet and must be limited in number to fifty (50) or fewer.
 - Performers or players may be without a face covering if they are 12 feet from other persons, including other performers.
 - In-seat gaming, arcades, billiards and other games that patrons physically touch should be disinfected between each use.
- Read the full directive here: <https://bit.ly/36deJzn>.
- A directive for stand-alone bars has not yet been issued.

Friday, May 15, 2020 (Press Conference)

- At his press conference on Friday, May 15, Governor Hutchinson announced the addition of a testing location finder to the state's COVID-19 information website at <https://govstatus.egov.com/ar-covid-19>. The location finder can be sorted by county, and includes contact information for each testing site.

- Secretary of Health Nate Smith announced that elective surgeries would be allowed to move forward if a COVID-19 test had been completed within 72 hours of the surgery, instead of the original requirement of 48 hours.
- Secretary of Parks, Tourism and Heritage Stacy Hurst announced that the east and west trails, as well as the day use area, of Pinnacle Mountain State Park would reopen at 5 p.m. today.

Tuesday, May 11, 2020 (Press Conference)

- At his press conference on Tuesday, May 11, Governor Hutchinson announced upcoming decision dates for the reopening of bars and summer camps/youth sports.
 - The decision date for bars is **Monday, May 18.**
 - The decision date for summer camps/youth sports is **Wednesday, May 20.**
- The governor also announced that the state had received from the CDC an allotment of the drug remdesivir, which has been approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for use on an emergency basis on patients hospitalized with COVID-19. The state received enough remdesivir to treat 50 patients.

Friday, May 8, 2020 (Press Conference)

- At his press conference on Friday, May 8, Governor Hutchinson announced new efforts to expand COVID-19 testing throughout the state to reach his previously set goal of 60,000 tests in the month of May. That goal would test 2 percent of the state's population.
- These efforts include:
 - Utilize the 70 Arkansas Department of Health Local Health Units to target areas of increased cases (Potential of 14,000 new tests)
 - Guidance that expectant moms delivery required to test (Potential of 1,500 new tests)
 - Pre-surgical testing
 - Abbott Point of Care machines across the state now have adequate kits and reagents for use
 - Minority Health Commission Mobile Lab to expand testing in minority areas of the state (Potential for 400 new tests)
 - Other commercial, UAMS and Department of Health labs will help reach the goal of 60,000 tests during May.
- Arkansas Economic Recovery Task Force chair Stuart Walton announced the launch of arkansasready.com, a one-stop resource guide for how industries and individuals can help the Arkansas economy recover from the effects of COVID-19.
- The Governor also announced that pools, splash pads, water parks and swim beaches would be able reopening on May 22 with specific guidelines in place.
- Per the ADH directive: "All types of recreational pools, including seasonal outdoor pools for state parks, hotels, motels, apartments, subdivision/POAs., indoor pools, municipal and community pools, splash pads, aquatic centers, commercial water parks, as well as swim beaches, can open to their patrons on May 22, 2020, if they meet the following requirements. Facilities can begin today to contact their local health units to facilitate opening." The following measures are required:
 - The number of people allowed in the facility is restricted to up to 50 percent of the approved bather load or capacity.
 - Restrict pool access to fewer entrances as needed to control access and overcrowding.
 - Maintain a log of persons entering the facility when possible for use in contact tracing should an outbreak occur.

- Screen employees for fever, cough, difficulty breathing, sore throat or loss of taste or smell upon arrival for each shift, and exclude them from work if they are ill.
- Place signage regarding the COVID-19 symptoms and exclusions at all entrances. These signs should inform patrons and staff that those who have any of the following characteristics should NOT be allowed to enter:
 - Have had a fever of 100.4°F or greater in the last 2 days;
 - Have a cough, difficulty breathing, sore throat, or loss of taste or smell;
 - Had contact with a person known to be infected with COVID-19 in the previous 14 days
- Place signage at all entrances advising the public that they may wish to refrain from entering if
 - They are 65 years of age or older.
 - They have underlying health conditions including high blood pressure, chronic lung disease, diabetes, severe obesity, asthma or weakened immunity.
- Physical distancing of 6 feet should be maintained between people in all pool areas. However, family members may sit and enter the pool together.
- Physical distancing must be enforced at slides, diving boards, and other features that require waiting in line. Place markings on surface to maintain a 6-foot distance and monitor for compliance.
- The pool's responsible party is required to maintain the safety of bathers by enforcing physical distancing of 6 feet.
- Tables, chairs, water fountains and other high touch surfaces should be disinfected frequently.
- Adjust poolside tables or chairs out so that seats are minimum of 6 feet from seats at adjacent tables.
- Household groups may sit closer together than 6 feet at tables.
- Maintain pool chemistry at the required levels. Test and document pH, free chlorine before opening and mid-afternoon to ensure proper residuals.
- Snack bars are permitted, but no self-service condiments or similar items are allowed.
- Pools and other water related facilities which require lifeguards can begin immediately to open for lifeguard training purposes only, once approved by the health department.
- This directive does not cover social events held at poolside. Such events are covered under the directives for large indoor or outdoor venues.
- Read the full directive here: <https://bit.ly/35OrTCl>.

Thursday, May 7, 2020 (Press Conference)

- At his press conference on Thursday, May 7, Governor Hutchinson announced that Arkansas' three casinos would be able to resume operations on May 18. Among the restrictions, casinos will open at one-third capacity with "stringent social distancing requirements." The ADH guidelines for casinos reopening are as follows:
- As a requirement for reopening, a casino must have a detailed plan for how they will conduct their operations to minimize the risk of transmission of COVID-19 within their facility approved by the Secretary of Health. At a minimum, the plan must include the following considerations:
 - Reopen at no more than 33 percent capacity for their facility.
 - Track attendees for possible use in contact tracing should an outbreak occur.
 - Screen staff and customers for possible illness or exposure to COVID-19 and exclude those persons who are ill or have been exposed.

- Maintain 6-foot physical distance between people.
 - Manage lines or queues for entrance, exit, making purchases, or for other reasons for maintaining a distance of 6 feet between people.
 - Arrange seating to maintain a 6-foot distance.
 - Provide for easy access for hand hygiene for staff and customers.
 - Enforce a requirement for face coverings for all persons present.
 - Maintain physical distancing during shows or live performances.
 - Address how food will be served in compliance with the May 11, 2020 ADH Directive on Resuming Restaurant Dine-in Operations (<https://bit.ly/2SkfFfw>).
 - Clean and disinfect the facility to minimize possible spread of the virus that causes COVID-19.
 - Specify how an employee testing positive for COVID-19 will be reported to the Arkansas Department of Health and assistance provided for contact tracing.
- Read the full directive here: <https://bit.ly/3dvrg3q>.

Wednesday, May 6, 2020 (Press Conference)

- At his press conference on Wednesday, May 6, Governor Hutchinson announced that non-urgent dental treatments would be allowed to resume on May 11.
 - Per the directive, issued by Secretary of Health Dr. Nate Smith: Based on a projected decrease in COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations, dental facilities and dental health care providers (DHCP) may resume elective dental services on May 11, 2020 when they meet the following requirements. Since dental work often creates aerosols, it carries an added risk of spreading COVID-19, especially to the DHCP, who can spread it to others.
1. Follow the screening guidelines for patients and dental team as outlined in the [ADH Guidelines](#).
 2. The proper Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is made available to all staff members and disinfectant protocols have been updated to reflect issues related to the SAR-CoV-2 Coronavirus (COVID-19).
 3. Phase I should begin with a reduced volume of patients scheduled to maintain appropriate social distancing, minimize congregation at the business desk for check-in/check-out patients;
 4. All providers must eliminate traditional reception/common rooms seating areas and implement non-traditional alternatives (call ahead registration, wait in car until called, etc.). Remove all magazines, TV remotes, toys, etc. that may typically be handled by patients; social distancing requirements are to be maintained in all settings where people must wait in order to minimize direct personal contact between individuals within the facility;
 5. All providers must plan for and ensure enhanced workplace sanitizing and disinfecting;
 6. All patients and dental team members should wear appropriate face mask coverings while within the facility;
 7. Using professional judgement, the focus of treatment should be on treating active decay, periodontitis and prevention services;
 8. Patients should use a preprocedural mouth rinse of 1% hydrogen peroxide or 0.2% providone to reduce the oral microflora;
 9. In high aerosol risk treatment areas, all providers must wear appropriate PPE and strictly adhere to aerosol mitigation and controls as outlined in the [ADH Guidelines](#);

10. Ultrasonic/piezo/sonic instrumentation is not to be used at this time. Limit dental hygiene procedures to hand instrumentation and slow speed hand piece for coronal polishing;
 11. Allot longer appointment times to allow proper disinfecting protocols to be completed. Follow the recommended time (product label) for the disinfectants to remain on surfaces in order to be effective.
 12. Implement protocols to minimize exposures after procedures:
 - Ask patients to wash their hands for 20 seconds and to wear the provided surgical mask when they leave the treatment area.
 - When possible, provide all necessary information to patients in the procedure room to avoid congregation at the front desk/waiting area on their way to exit the clinic.
 - Complete paperwork electronically before or after the appointment if possible.
 13. Transitioning to subsequent phases will be determined by the course and decline of impact related to COVID-19 cases in Arkansas; information will be disseminated through the ADH website, the Arkansas State Board of Dental Examiners and the associations representing the dentists and dental hygienists;
 14. Each dental facility must have an ample supply of PPE (including N95 respirator mask or comparable alternative) for resuming elective dental treatment while maintaining a reserve should there be a resurgence of the virus.
- Read the directive here: <https://bit.ly/2SLFuFw>.

Tuesday, May 5, 2020 (Press Conference)

- Governor Asa Hutchinson issued Executive Order 20-25 (<https://bit.ly/2A5FB8v>) to Amend Executive Order 20-03 Renewing the Disaster and Public Health Emergency to Prevent the Spread and Mitigate the Impact of COVID-19. The order extends the disaster and public health emergency for an additional 45 days. Per the press release:

“Every industry sector in Arkansas has been affected by the outbreak of COVID-19,” Governor Hutchinson said. “The pandemic continues to have a statewide impact on grocery stores, small businesses, pharmacies, hospitals, and restaurants to name a few. It’s important that we continue to adequately support and protect our industries and people until the threat is no longer imminent.”
- The governor also issued an updated directive for out-of-state travelers, which is detailed in EO 20-25. Under this new directive, all travelers from New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, New Orleans, and all international locations must follow quarantine directives outlined by the Arkansas Department of Health Secretary Dr. Nate Smith. Governor Hutchinson and Secretary Smith have identified these locations based on the high level of COVID-19 cases in each state or region. The Secretary of Health may amend the list of quarantine locations as the situation progresses.

Monday, May 4, 2020 (Press Conference)

- At his press conference on Monday, May 4, 2020, Governor Asa Hutchinson announced guidance for reopening houses of worship, as well as directives for the Phase 1 reopening of large indoor and outdoor venues.

- Read the Department of Health Guidance for Faith-Based Organizations: <https://bit.ly/35xN385>.
- Although places of worship were excluded from the Governor's Executive Order 20-10 issued on March 26, 2020, in conjunction with the directive on Limitations on Gatherings, most faith leaders in Arkansas did comply with the spirit of that directive and ceased holding worship services in person and moved worship instead to an online or outdoor platform for their congregants. The Governor issued further limitations that applied to places of worship in the Governor's Executive Order 20-13 on April 4, 2020, in conjunction with the Directive that provided further social distancing protocols.
- During Phase 1 of Reopening Arkansas, places of worship may resume corporate, in-person services if they can comply with the following directives:
 - Houses of worship are **strongly encouraged to continue to offer online platforms** for participation in worship because it is not yet advisable/feasible for all congregants to come for in-person services
 - Post signs at all building entrances advising congregants not to enter if
 - They have had a fever of 100.4°F or higher in the past 2 days
 - They have cough, shortness of breath or other symptoms typical of COVID-19
 - They have had known exposure to someone with COVID-19 in the past 14 days
 - Post signs at all building entrances advising congregants that they may wish to refrain from entering if they are 65 or more years old or have underlying health conditions including high blood pressure, chronic lung disease, diabetes, severe obesity, asthma or immunocompromising conditions, because they are at higher risk for severe illness if infected by COVID-19.
 - Post signs at all building entrances to inform people that **no one** will be admitted into the building without a face covering and that face coverings must be worn by congregants at all times while indoors. The only exceptions to the wearing of face coverings will be:
 - Worship leaders, only while addressing the congregation
 - Performing singers, only while singing
 - The above individuals must stand at a 12-foot distance from others while speaking or singing without a face covering
 - All congregants who participate in Holy Communion, only while actually consuming the Elements
 - Face coverings for children under 10 years are optional
 - Face coverings for children under 2 years old are prohibited by CDC guidelines
 - Places of worship may make their own decision on whether to allow children under 10 to return to corporate worship during Phase 1, as this may pose some risk of transmission of COVID-19
 - Provide hand sanitizing stations at all public entrances.
 - Lines or queues for entrance and exit must be marked or monitored for maintaining a distance of 6 feet between people.
 - Instruct all congregants, staff and volunteers that the strict 6-foot physical distancing protocol applies to everyone aside from family groups, both indoors and outdoors. As above, speakers and singers will require additional distance while speaking or singing without face coverings.

- As much as possible, move “meet and greet” times before and after services outdoors. Because of the indoor face covering requirement, refreshments should be offered outdoors only.
 - Instruct people to refrain from any physical contact with each other outside of family groups—no hand shaking, touching, embracing or reverencing of hands/rings of clergy.
 - Aside from congregant family groups, seating in the sanctuary must follow strict physical distancing protocols with 6 feet between individuals.
 - Eliminate or alter the use of items that are traditionally touched or handled by many different people. Examples are offering plates, the Torah (touch only by the bearer), holy water stations, shared prayer and song books, and the common cup (chalice) for Holy Communion.
 - Refrain from having people come forward to a common altar rail for Holy Communion, blessing, altar call, etc.
 - Refrain from holding religious education classes for children/youth or offering childcare.
 - Sanitize all high-touch surfaces in the sanctuary and common areas after and between services.
- Governor Hutchinson also announced that large indoor and outdoor venues will be allowed to open on a limited basis to audiences of 50 or less people, per two directives from the Arkansas Department of Health. Outdoor venues such as theaters, arenas, sports venues, race tracks, stadiums, auction houses, amusement centers and fairgrounds may reopen on May 4. Indoor venues such as theaters, arenas, stadiums and auction houses that are designed for large groups may reopen on May 18 on a limited basis.
 - The Arkansas Department of Health issued a directive that allows the venues to open for audiences of fewer than 50 and that requires strict social distance among performers, contestants, and members of the audience.

“We are attempting to move past the restrictions that have been necessary during this pandemic, but we must do so in a manner that is based on solid data,” Governor Hutchinson said in a press release. “I am confident this measured reopening is the best approach that will allow us to enjoy these entertainment venues again. As we cautiously emerge from this difficult time, we will keep an eye on data for any evidence that we are moving too quickly.”

- **Outdoor Venues: May 4**
 - The directive covers outdoor venues for commercial, community, or civic events and activities where an audience, spectators or a gathering of people are present, such as at concerts, plays, sporting events, rodeos, races, fundraisers, parades, fairs, livestock shows, auctions, carnivals and festivals. Examples of such venues include theaters, arenas, sports venues, race tracks, stadiums, auction houses, amusement centers and fairgrounds.
 - Gatherings subject to this directive also include, without limitation, community, civic, public, leisure, commercial or sporting events. This directive is not intended for gatherings of people in unconfined outdoor spaces, such as parks or athletic fields where physical distancing of at least six (6) feet can be easily achieved.

- Find the Arkansas Department of Health directive for large outdoor venues here: <https://bit.ly/2W42QrW>.
- **Indoor Venues: May 18**
 - This directive covers indoor venues for commercial, community, or civic events and activities where an audience, spectators or a gathering of people are present, such as concerts, plays, movies, lectures, presentations, conferences, conventions, sporting events, races, fundraisers, trade shows and festivals.
 - Venues include auditoriums, lecture halls, movie theaters, other theaters, museums, arenas, sports venues, race tracks, stadiums, gymnasiums, auction houses, amusement centers, barns, exhibit halls, conventions centers and funeral homes. The list of venues also includes recreational facilities such as bowling alleys and trampoline parks.
 - Gatherings subject to this directive also include, without limitation, community, civic, public, leisure, commercial, or sporting events.
 - Find the Arkansas Department of Health directive for large indoor venues <https://bit.ly/2ywb8Qn>.
- *Guidelines for reopening both indoor and outdoor venues are as follows:*
 - The performers/players/contestants must be separated from the audience by at least 12 feet and must be limited to 50 or fewer.
 - The audience is limited to 50 or fewer people.
 - Lines or queues for entrance, exit, making purchases or for other reasons must be marked or monitored to maintain 6 feet between people.
 - Seating must be arranged to maintain 6 feet between members of the audience.
 - Family groups may sit together but maintain 6 feet between groups.
 - Every other row of seating should be unoccupied.
 - Face coverings are required except for children younger than 10.
 - Performers/players/contestants may be without a face covering if they are 12 feet from each other.
 - Signs must be posted at all entrances advising members of the public not to enter if:
 - They have fever, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, or a recent loss of taste or smell.
 - They have had known exposure to someone with COVID-19 in the past 14 days.
 - Signs must be posted at all entrances advising members of the public that they may wish to refrain from entering if:
 - They are 65 years of age or older.
 - They have underlying health conditions including high blood pressure, chronic lung disease, diabetes, severe obesity, asthma or weakened immunity.
 - Hand-sanitizer stations must be available at all entrances and exits.
 - Refreshments may be served. However, self-service operations, including, but not limited to, salad bars, buffets and condiment bars, shall not be allowed.
 - The facility, including seating, shall be cleaned and disinfected before and after each use.
 - Frequently touched surfaces shall be cleaned periodically during the course of the event.

Friday, May 1, 2020 (Press Conference)

- Governor Asa Hutchinson announced that barber shops, body art establishments, body art schools, cosmetology establishments, massage therapy clinics and spas, and medical spas may resume operations on **May 6, 2020**, under Phase 1 guidelines established to protect the health and safety of employees and patrons, Governor Asa Hutchinson announced at his daily press briefing today.

“We have all felt the absence of these services over the past number of weeks, and professionals are eager to resume their work,” Governor Hutchinson said in a press release. “I have great confidence that our stylists, cosmetologists and other professionals will work very hard to protect themselves and their clients and still provide the highest quality of service.”

The aforementioned businesses must follow Phase 1 guidelines to resume operations on May 6:

- Providers may resume services, however those services shall be scheduled by appointment with adequate time between appointments to properly clean and disinfect. Walk-in appointments are prohibited during Phase 1.
- Vulnerable populations (i.e. those persons over the age of 65 or with chronic medical conditions) should consider remaining home during Phase 1.
- Clients shall be pre-screened for potential COVID-related symptoms prior to arrival for the appointment using the following questions:
 - Have you had a fever of 100.4 F or greater in the last 2 days?
 - Do you have a cough, difficulty breathing, sore throat or loss of taste or smell?
 - Have you had contact with a person known to be infected with COVID-19 within the past 14 days?

Those answering “yes” to any of the above shall have their services postponed for 14 days.

- Employees/licensees shall be pre-screened with both the standardized questionnaire and a daily temperature check. Any employee with a temperature of 100.4 F or greater will not be allowed to work.
- Services shall not be performed on clients who show any sign of illness such as fever, cough or runny nose. Signage shall be posted informing clients about this policy.
- All persons in the salon/shop/clinic are required to maintain physical distancing of at least 6 feet while services are not being rendered. For most entities, occupancy will be limited to no more than 10 persons, including all support staff.
- In smaller facilities, the 6-foot physical-distancing condition may require that fewer than 10 persons are present at any given time.
- Larger facilities (able to accommodate more than 10 persons while maintaining appropriate physical distancing) shall operate no more than 30 percent of their stations during Phase 1.
- Barbers, stylists and employees shall wear a face covering at all times. A cloth face covering is acceptable for this purpose.
- Clients shall wear masks as services permit. A cloth face covering is acceptable for this purpose. Signage shall be posted informing clients about this policy.

- Waiting area chairs shall be positioned to ensure 6 feet of social distancing. When possible, clients should wait outside of the shop/salon/clinic until called by their stylist/therapist.
- All existing infection control rules remain in effect and will be enforced. Nonporous surfaces shall be cleaned and disinfected prior to use. Porous items shall be discarded after a single use.
- Gloves shall be worn for all services as required by Rule. Licensees are encouraged to wear gloves for all other services when able.
- Handwashing shall be performed before and after each service.
- The Department of Health COVID Infection Control Education module should be viewed prior to reopening.
- Practitioners shall maintain a record of the name, date and contact information for each client serviced for a period of one month. This may be accomplished using a sign-in sheet.
- Barbering, cosmetology, body art and massage schools shall remain closed for in-person instruction during Phase 1. However, practical examinations may occur if they are performed on inanimate objects (i.e. mannequins, artificial skin, etc.) Appropriate physical distancing shall be maintained during testing.
- Read the full Arkansas Department of Health directive for reopening barber shops, body art establishments, cosmetology establishments, massage therapy clinics and spas, and medical spas here: <https://bit.ly/2YuKoun>.

Thursday, April 30, 2020 (Press Conference)

- Governor Asa Hutchinson announced that gyms and fitness centers may resume operations on **May 4, 2020**, under certain guidelines established to protect the health and safety of employees and patrons. Under these guidelines, gyms and fitness centers must implement precautions such as use of face masks except when exercising, daily temperature checks for employees and patrons, and social distancing of at least 12 feet while exercising.

“I am pleased that Arkansans will be able to resume physical activity at their local gyms,” Governor Hutchinson said in a press release. “There are still limitations on the use of these facilities, but if carefully observed, I am confident we will be able to return to our normal exercise routines soon. I look forward to resuming my weekly game of pick-up basketball once all restrictions lift, but until then, it’s important that managers, employees and patrons carefully follow the guidelines as they resume operations.”

Gyms and fitness centers must meet the following criteria to resume operations on May 4:

- Screening must be completed on entry for all staff and participants. Those who have any of the following characteristics should not be allowed to enter:
 - Have returned from travel to New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, New Orleans or overseas within the last 14 days
 - Have had a fever of 100.4°F or greater in the past two days
 - Have a cough, difficulty breathing, sore throat, or loss of taste or smell

- Had contact with a person known to be infected with COVID-19 within the previous 14 days
 - Have compromised immune systems and/or have chronic diseases.
- Staff should wear a face covering or mask at all times. Patrons should wear a face covering except when actively exercising.
- Prohibit the use of pools, spas, showers, saunas, etc., at this time. Locker rooms are to be used only for storage of personal items. Maintain physical distancing while in locker rooms.
- Hand sanitizer should be available throughout the facility.
- Staff should ensure that all exercise machines or equipment are sanitized after each use (via wipe-down with disposable disinfectant wipes, Lysol or the equivalent).
- Maintain proper spacing from others by working out with 12 feet between each person. This may require closing or moving some equipment.
- Avoid personal contact at all times, including hand shaking.
- Individual training sessions, indoor group fitness classes and workouts that require a partner must maintain 12-foot spacing between each person at this time.
- Read the press release here: <https://bit.ly/2YoiXm2>.
- Per the Department of Health directive from Secretary of Health Dr. Nate Smith: “Note: This directive does not address team or youth sports. These will be addressed by a different document later. This directive also does not address indoor entertainment venues, such as bowling alleys, trampoline parks and indoor amusement centers, which will be addressed later. Read the directive here: <https://bit.ly/2YtGykW>.”

Wednesday, April 29, 2020 (Press Conference)

- Governor Asa Hutchinson announced that restaurants in Arkansas may resume limited dine-in service on May 11 under Phase 1 guidelines that require daily health screening of staff, use of face masks and gloves, and strict social distancing.
- “Based on current data that shows we have slowed the spread of COVID-19, we have decided it is safe to resume dine-in restaurant service with some common-sense limits,” Governor Hutchinson said in a press release. “This is a significant but cautious step on the path back to normalcy. We will monitor the success of this step, and move to Phase 2 as quickly as we safely can.”
- Read the press release here: <https://bit.ly/2SIX96B>.
- Phase 1 restrictions will remain in place until Secretary of Health Dr. Nate Smith determines that they may be relaxed or discontinued. For full details of the Phase 1 restrictions, as well as plans for Phase 2 and Phase 3, read the Arkansas Department of Health directive here: <https://bit.ly/2SkfFfw>.
- The restrictions on dine-in service under this directive include:
 - Restaurants must limit number of customers to one-third of total capacity.

- Tables must be 10 feet apart so that diners will be seated six feet away from diners at other tables.
 - Each employee who directly interacts with patrons must wear a face mask that completely covers nose and mouth. Kitchen staff and others are encouraged to wear a mask.
 - Each employee must wear gloves. Gloves should be changed between each customer, customer group or task.
 - Management must conduct a daily health screening of all employees before they enter the restaurant. An employee with a cough, sore throat, fever or shortness of breath must not enter the restaurant.
 - Patrons must wear a face covering until the food or drink is served.
 - Salad bars, buffets and other self-serve features will remain closed.
 - Groups must be 10 or fewer customers.
 - Tables, chairs, salt/pepper shakers, condiment containers and napkin holders will be cleaned and disinfected after each customer.
 - Bars and entertainment operations (such as live music, in-seat gaming devices, or arcades) are prohibited.
 - Normal service of alcohol within the restaurant seating area is allowed.
 - Restrooms should be disinfected frequently.
 - Service may be declined to patrons not wearing masks.
- Secretary of Commerce Mike Preston also announced the Ready for Business Grant Program to assist companies in protecting their employees and visitors while establishing customer confidence. The Ready for Business Grant Program is designed to provide grants from \$1,000 to \$100,000, depending on the number of employees, to assist with COVID-19-related expenses, such as personal protective equipment (PPE), deep cleaning, signage, hand sanitizer dispensers, marketing and more. Eligible expenditures must be made between March 1, 2020-December 31, 2020.
 - The Grant Program opened at 5 p.m. Wednesday evening and quickly received more applications than current funding would allow. For more information about the program and updates on additional funding, please visit the Arkansas Economic Development Commission at <https://bit.ly/3bR6Amn>.

Tuesday, April 28, 2020 (Press Conference)

- Governor Asa Hutchinson and Secretary of Parks, Tourism and Heritage Stacy Hurst announced that Arkansas State Parks will begin a limited reopening of some facilities starting May 1. Some high-use trails at Pinnacle Mountain State Park, Devil's Den State Park and Petit Jean State Park will remain closed.
 - **May 1:** Arkansas residents with self-contained RVs will be allowed to stay overnight in campgrounds. Bath houses remain closed.
 - **May 15:** Cabins, lodges and RV rentals will be available for Arkansas residents only. Rentals will be limited to Friday through Monday to allow for deep cleaning between visitors.

- **May 15:** The following will be open to limited capacity and with social distancing enforced:
 - Visitor information centers
 - Museums and exhibits
 - Gift shops
 - Golf pro shops
 - Marinas
 - Equipment rental
- Read the full press release here: <https://bit.ly/2YeWFCT>.

Friday, April 24, 2020 (Press Conference)

- Governor Asa Hutchinson issued Executive Order 20-23 (<https://bit.ly/2KLSX0E>) to Amend Executive Order 20-03 For The Purpose Of Observing Social Distancing Guidelines Associated With COVID-19 In Special Elections Held On May 12, 2020.
- The order suspends the following provisions of Arkansas Code for special elections held on May 12, 2020:
 - Suspension of Arkansas Code Annotated § 7-5-101(d)(3)(A) and 7-5-101(e)(2)(C) regarding the moving and consolidation of polling sites, to the extent necessary, in order to allow counties to consolidate polls to no less than one (1) polling site up to three (3) days before the election so long as adequate notice of the change has been posted at polling sites that would have otherwise been used absent the emergency.
 - Provisions under Arkansas Code Annotated § 7-5-402 that require qualified electors be unavoidably absent or unable to attend an election due to illness or physical disability, so that all eligible qualified electors currently entitled to vote in the May 12, 2020 election may request the appropriate absentee ballots from their county of residence.
 - Provisions under Arkansas Code Annotated § 7-5-404(a)(3)(A)(ii) to allow county officials to act on an application for an absentee ballot that is received within seven (7) days before the election date and subsequently mail an absentee ballot to the qualified elector who requested the ballot if the voter is otherwise entitled to vote in the election.

Thursday, April 23, 2020 (Press Conference)

- Governor Asa Hutchinson launched a two-day “Arkansas Surge Campaign” with a goal of increasing testing for COVID-19 from 1,000 to 1,500 test per day over the next two days, beginning Friday, April 24. “If you think you have symptoms, don’t wait—get tested,” he said at the briefing.
- Per the press release: “The two-day campaign could provide an early diagnosis and quicker treatment for people who might have been reluctant to test early in the pandemic. The increased number of people who go for testing during the Friday and Saturday Surge will also help give the state a more complete understanding of the

presence of COVID-19 in Arkansas.”

- The governor presented four recommendations from his Testing Advisory Group to expand and increase testing in Arkansas. Those recommendations are as follows:
 - Expand testing for all patients with symptoms consistent with COVID-19 and those with history of potential exposure.
 - Expand testing for contact investigations.
 - Increase testing in high-risk settings such as long-term-care facilities.
 - Develop a strategy for statewide serosurveillance.
- Read the full press release here: <https://bit.ly/2xMzghA>.
- The Arkansas Department of Health offers guidance for getting tested: <https://bit.ly/2VyW3GI>.
- The ADH also issued an alert: Everyone Should Be Wearing Face Coverings in Public: <https://bit.ly/2S5fi8x>.

Wednesday, April 22, 2020 (Press Conference)

- Governor Asa Hutchinson announced that the April 3 Arkansas Department of Health directive restricting elective surgeries and procedures would be lifted incrementally beginning on Monday, April 27. An updated directive will be released today or tomorrow, per the press briefing. We will share that information when it becomes available.
- The governor also announced a series of decision dates related to lifting restrictions on restaurants, gyms, barbers and beauty shops, and houses of worship and larger venues, including sporting events. Those dates are as follows:
 - April 29: Restaurants
 - April 30: Gyms
 - May 1: Barber and Beauty Salons
 - May 4: Places of Worship and Larger Venues

Tuesday, April 21, 2020 (Press Conference)

- Governor Hutchinson issued Executive Order 20-21 (<https://bit.ly/3eFMJlr>) to establish the Governor’s COVID-19 Testing Advisory Group to make recommendations to expand the capacity and performance of COVID-19 testing in the state. The working group includes senior representatives of the Arkansas Department of Health (ADH), the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS), Baptist Health of Arkansas and Arkansas Children’s. The group will examine the state’s supply of testing equipment and make recommendations to maintain adequate testing capabilities and conduct surveillance testing across the state.
Read the press release here: <https://bit.ly/3atjDZE>.
- Members of the Governor’s COVID-19 Testing Working Group are:
 - Dr. Nathaniel Smith, ADH

- Dr. Glen Baker, ADH
- Dr. Naveen Patil, ADH
- Dr. Katie Seely, ADH
- Dr. Jennifer Hunt, UAMS
- Dr. Jose Romero, ADH, UAMS, Arkansas Children's
- Dr. Atul Kothari, ADH, UAMS
- Mr. Robin Mitchell, Arkansas Children's
- Dr. Bobby Boyanton, Arkansas Children's

Saturday, April 18, 2020 (Press Conference)

- Governor Hutchinson issued Executive Order 20-20 (<https://bit.ly/2VK44Y3>) to establish the Governor's Taskforce for Economic Recovery. The task force includes 27 leaders from the private sector and public agencies who will examine the impact of COVID-19 on businesses and industries in the state. The task force will recommend a strategy to the Governor for our economy to shift out of low gear consistent with public-health guidance. Read the press release here: <https://bit.ly/2VPkcl2>.
- Members of the task force include:
 - Steuart Walton, Runway Group (Chair)
 - Wes Ward, Department of Agriculture
 - Mike Preston, Department of Commerce
 - Stacy Hurst, Department of Parks, Heritage, and Tourism
 - Ted Thomas, Public Service Commission
 - Randy Zook, Arkansas State Chamber of Commerce
 - Sylvester Smith, National Federation of Independent Business
 - Joey Dean, Associated General Contractors of Arkansas
 - Annemarie Jazic, Dillard's Inc.
 - Charlie Spakes, Arkansas Grocers and Retail Merchants Association
 - Montine McNulty, Arkansas Hospitality Association
 - Kelly Eichler, Indoor Recreational Facilities
 - Deke Whitbeck, Arkansas Game and Fish Foundation
 - Lance Taylor, Arkansas Activities Association
 - Hunter Yurachek, University of Arkansas
 - Shannon Newton, Arkansas Trucking Association
 - Charles Frazier, Rock Region METRO
 - Lorrie Trogden, Arkansas Bankers Association
 - Dr. Sonny Tucker, Arkansas Southern Baptist Convention
 - Bishop Gary Mueller, Arkansas Conference of United Methodists
 - Bishop Michael Mitchell, African Methodist Episcopal Church 12th District
 - Dr. Richard Abernathy, Arkansas Association of Educational Administrators
 - Andy Goodman, Arkansas Independent Colleges and Universities
 - Andrea Henderson, Arkansas Association of Community Colleges
 - Dr. Chuck Welch, Arkansas State University System
 - David Wroten, Arkansas Medical Society
 - Bo Ryall, Arkansas Hospital Association

Wednesday, April 15, 2020 (Press Conference)

- Governor Hutchinson announced that the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) has approved Arkansas' request to use Medicaid funds to temporarily increase the weekly income of long-term services and supports (LTSS) direct-care workers during the COVID-19 pandemic. Per the press release:

“CMS’s approval of this request is welcome news for LTSS direct-care workers, who are working long hours to see that our most vulnerable Arkansans are well-cared for during this public health emergency. Not only will these funds help ensure continuity of care, the extra pay will alleviate some of the financial stress for the caregivers, who are selflessly serving in nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and in private homes at increased risk to their own health.”

- For more information about the payments and worker eligibility, read the full press release here: <https://bit.ly/3enSAIF>.

Tuesday, April 14, 2020 (Press Conference)

- Governor Hutchinson issued Executive Order 20-19 (<https://bit.ly/2xlUEdn>) to amend Executive Order 20-03 for the purpose of suspending provisions regarding workers' compensation qualifications in the state of Arkansas for first responders and front-line health care workers.
 - Suspend provisions of Ark. Code Ann. § 11-9-601(C)(2) that currently require a contagious or infectious disease be contracted in or in immediate connection to a hospital or sanitorium to allow first responders and front-line healthcare workers to seek workers compensation for exposure to COVID-19 in the line of duty outside of those settings; and
 - Suspend provisions of Ark. Code Ann. § 11-9-601(C)(3) that currently bars compensation for exposure to a disease to which the general public is exposed to allow first responders and front-line healthcare workers to seek workers compensation for exposure to COVID-19 if contracted in the line of duty; and
 - Define exposure to COVID-19 as an "unusual and unpredicted incident" under Ark. Code Ann. § 11-9-114, as it pertains to pulmonary and respiratory accidents that are the major cause of injury, illness, or death to first responders and front-line healthcare workers for the duration of this emergency; and
 - Pursuant to this Order, first responders and front-line health care workers who test positive for COVID-19 may be eligible for workers compensation if they can demonstrate a causal connection, as required by law, between their diagnosis of COVID-19 and exposure to COVID-19 as a result of their employment or occupation; and
 - Claims for workers compensation due to exposure to COVID-19 must be actually incurred due to one's employment and not due to exposure outside the line of duty; and

- Authority granted pursuant to this Order is effective as of the issuance of Executive Order 20-03 and shall automatically expire when the state of emergency is terminated, or at such other time as I may direct in a subsequent Executive Order.

Monday, April 13, 2020 (Press Conference)

- Governor Asa Hutchinson issued Executive Order 20-17 (<https://bit.ly/3a8pCTv>) to establish “The Governor’s Medical Advisory Committee for Post-Peak COVID-19 Response.” The committee will examine testing capabilities and social distancing protocols and make any recommendations necessary to avoid a resurgence of COVID-19. Dr. Nathaniel Smith, secretary of the Arkansas Department of Health (ADH), will serve as the committee chairman.
 - Members of the Governor’s Medical Advisory Committee for Post-Peak COVID-19 Response are:
 - Dr. Nathaniel Smith – Secretary of ADH (Chair)
 - Dr. Jose Romero – ADH Chief Medical Officer and Chief of Pediatric Infectious Disease at University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS)/Arkansas Children’s Hospital
 - Dr. Naveen Patil – ADH Medical Director for Infectious Disease
 - Dr. Jennifer Dillaha – ADH State Epidemiologist
 - Dr. Austin Porter – ADH Deputy Chief Science Officer and Assistant Professor at the UAMS College of Public Health
 - Dr. Greg Bledsoe – Surgeon General of Arkansas
 - Dr. Jerrilyn Jones – ADH Medical Director for Preparedness and Response and Associate Professor of Emergency Medicine at UAMS
 - Dr. Sam Greenfield – ADH Medical Director for Family Health and Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology at UAMS
- Governor Hutchinson issued Executive Order 20-18 (<https://bit.ly/2V6lIdL>) to amend Executive Order 20-03 for the purpose of equipping health care professionals with the tools necessary to combat the COVID-19 emergency.
 - A suspension of Arkansas Code to the extent necessary to remove limits on working hours for physicians, physician assistants, specialist assistants, nurse practitioners, licensed registered nurses, and licensed practical nurses, to allow healthcare facilities affected by the disaster emergency to maintain adequate staffing and otherwise respond to the COVID-19 outbreak;
 - An authorization and request to certain emergency responders, as defined by Ark. Code Ann. § 12-75-103(7), including physicians and other health care providers licensed, registered, certified or otherwise legally permitted to practice in this state and all licensed health care facilities legally permitted to provide services in support of this state and their administrators, to provide medical and health care, assistance, and advice in response to the COVID-19 pandemic during the declared emergency under directives and orders of the Secretary of the Arkansas Department of Health;

- A suspension of Arkansas Code to the extent necessary to allow emergency medical treatment protocol development or modification to occur solely with the approval of the Secretary of the Arkansas Department of Health, which may include but is not limited to: (a) triage, diagnostic testing, and/ or treatment to patients with known or suspected COVID-19; (b) services provided in response to personnel shortages caused by COVID-19; (c) cancelling, postponing or denying elective surgeries or procedures or other routine care; (d) redeploying or cross training staff not typically assigned to such duties, to the extent necessary to respond to the COVID-19 outbreak; (e) planning to or enacting crisis standards of care measures, such as modifying numbers of beds, preserving personal protective equipment, and triaging access to service or equipment; and (f) reducing recordkeeping requirements to the extent necessary for health care providers and facilities to perform tasks as may be necessary to respond to the COVID-19 outbreak;
- A suspension of Ark. Code Ann. § 12-75-103(7)(C), to the extent necessary to provide immunity from liability to the following emergency responders, whether employed by the State or Federal Government a private entity, or non-profit entity, for any injury or death alleged to have been sustained directly as a result of an act or omission by such medical professional in the course of providing medical services in support of the State's response to the COVID-19 outbreak or the implementation of measures to control the causes of the COVID-19 epidemic: (a) physicians; (b) physician assistants; (c) specialist assistants; (d) nurse practitioners; (e) licensed registered nurses; and (f) and licensed practical nurses;
- A grant of immunity from liability under Section 4 of this Order will not be extended to an emergency responder, who as a result of his or her action or omission, causes an injury or death due to: (a) acting outside the scope of his or her practice unless he or she has been redeployed as a result of Section 3(d) of this order; or (b) acting in gross negligence, willful misconduct, or bad faith.

Monday, April 6, 2020 (Press Conference)

- Governor Asa Hutchinson has extended the mandatory closure of all Arkansas public schools through the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year, he announced at a news conference today. Arkansas educators will continue to provide alternative methods of instruction (AMI) for students to continue learning at home. Read the press release here: <https://bit.ly/2UOyWaw>.

Saturday, April 4, 2020 (Press Conference)

- Governor Asa Hutchinson issued Executive Order 20-13 (<https://bit.ly/2yD42tg>) to amend Executive Order 20-03 (<https://bit.ly/34eZKUC>) regarding the public health emergency concerning COVID-19 for the purpose of imposing further restrictions to prevent the spread of COVID-19:

- **Effective as of 12:01 a.m. on April 6, 2020 until further notice:**
- The Directives of this order shall supersede the directives of Executive Order 20-10 <https://bit.ly/2ViFyNJ>:
- **All public and private gatherings of any number of people occurring outside a single household or living unit are subject to the following directives and exceptions:**
 - Due to the high risk of community spread of COVID-19, gatherings of more than ten (10) people in any confined indoor or outdoor space are prohibited until further notice. Gatherings subject to this directive include, without limitation, community, civic, public, leisure, commercial, or sporting events, concerts, conferences, conventions, fundraisers, parades, fairs, and festivals; and
 - This directive does not apply to gatherings of ten (10) or more people in unenclosed, outdoor spaces such as parks, trails, athletic fields and courts, parking lots, golf courses, and driving ranges where social distancing of at least six (6) feet can be easily maintained; and
 - This directive does not apply to businesses, manufacturers, construction companies, places of worship, the Arkansas General Assembly, municipal or county governing bodies, or the judiciary; however, these entities are advised to limit person-to-person contact, maintain appropriate social distancing of at least six (6) feet, and adhere to the social distancing protocols mandated by this order; and
 - The Secretary of Health reserves the right to exercise his authority to prevent the spread of disease in this State if, in his judgment, any of the excluded entities are operating in a manner that is a risk to public health.
- **All businesses, manufacturers, construction companies, and places of worship shall implement the following social distancing protocols:**
 - Limit the number of people who can enter into the facility at any one time to ensure that people in the facility can easily maintain a minimum six-foot distance from one another;
 - If lines form at a facility (inside or outside), facilities shall mark off six-foot increments at a minimum, establishing where individuals should stand to maintain adequate social distancing;
 - Provide hand sanitizer, soap and water, or effective disinfectant at or near the entrance of the facility and in other appropriate areas for use by the public and employees, and in locations where there is high-frequency employee interaction with members of the public;
 - Retail businesses shall provide contactless payment systems or provide for disinfecting all payment portals, pens, and styluses after each use;

- Regularly disinfect any high-touch surfaces;
- Post a sign at the entrance of the facility informing all employees, customers, and congregants that they should: avoid entering the facility if they have a cough or fever; maintain a minimum six-foot distance from one another; sneeze and cough into one's elbow; not shake hands or engage in any unnecessary physical contact.
- **Commercial lodgings and short-term rentals, including, but not limited to, hotels, motels, and vacation rentals, shall only permit occupancy for the following authorized guests:**
 - Healthcare professionals;
 - First responders;
 - Law enforcement;
 - State or Federal employees on official business;
 - National Guard Members on active duty;
 - Airline crew members;
 - Patients of hospitals and their families;
 - Journalists;
 - Persons unable to return to their home due to COVID-19 travel restrictions;
 - Arkansas citizens unable to return to their home due to exigent circumstances, such as fire, flood, tornado, or other disaster;
 - Persons in need of shelter due to domestic violence or homelessness;
 - Employees of hotels, motels, or other service providers/contractors of a hotel or motel; and
 - Persons away from their home due to work or work-related travel
- K-12 schools and extracurricular activities, including athletic events and practices, will remain closed for on-site instruction until such time as the Governor and Secretary of Education deem appropriate;
- State government employees will continue to conduct business through both remote work and on-site work. On-site government work will be limited to employees that are critical to the necessary function of government during a public health emergency and are required to report to work on site;
- Bars, clubs, and restaurants shall remain closed for dine-in purposes and remain open for takeaway and delivery only;
- Gyms (including fitness centers/clubs, fitness classes, and group fitness studios) and indoor entertainment venues, such as bowling alleys, trampoline parks, and indoor amusement centers, shall remain closed to nonessential functions;
- Casinos shall remain closed;
- Barbers, body art establishments, body art schools, cosmetology establishments, massage therapy clinics/spas, and medical spas shall remain closed;
- The directives of the Arkansas Department of Health issued on March 13, 2020, regarding long term health facilities shall remain in effect for the duration of this

order;

- Cities and counties taking reasonable measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 by imposing curfews and closing city or county owned parks and facilities shall not be interpreted as a quarantine regulation of commerce or travel. Curfews should not prevent citizens of any age from traveling to and from work, acquiring food or essential goods and services, walking pets, or acquiring exercise outdoors while maintaining social distance of at least six (6) feet;
- *Executive Orders of the Governor issued pursuant Ark. Code Ann. §§ 12-75-101, et seq., have the force and effect of law. Additionally, pursuant to Ark. Code Ann. § 20-7-101, violation of a directive from the Secretary of Health during this public health emergency is a misdemeanor offense, and upon conviction thereof is punishable by a fine of not less than one hundred dollars (\$100) nor more than five hundred dollars (\$500) or by imprisonment not exceeding one (1) month, or both. All law enforcement officers within this state shall enforce the directives of this order and those of the Secretary of Health to preserve the health and safety of all Arkansans during this emergency.*

Friday, April 3, 2020 (Press Conference)

- The Arkansas Department of Health issued a directive on elective surgeries. Per the directive (<https://bit.ly/2xYegEg>):
- On March 30, 2020, a guidance letter was sent to all health facilities, including ambulatory surgery centers and abortion facilities. In view of the continued uncertainty and increase in cases of COVID-19, there are increasing concerns of staff and medical supplies capabilities in hospitals statewide. The following mandatory actions can preserve staff, personal protective equipment (PPE), and patient care supplies; ensure staff and patient safety; and expand available hospital capacity during the COVID-19 pandemic:
 - Procedures, testing, and office visits that can be safely postponed shall be rescheduled to an appropriate future date.
 - Routine dental and eye care visits shall be postponed.
 - Emergent, urgent and care designated as an exception below will continue.
 - Small rural hospitals under 60 beds and critical access hospitals, though strongly advised to follow this directive to maximize resources, are excluded from this directive.
- Exceptions to this directive should be made in the following circumstances:
 - If there is a threat to the patient's life if the procedure is not performed.
 - If there is a threat of permanent dysfunction of an extremity or organ system if the surgery is not done.
 - If there is a risk of metastasis or progression of staging of a disease or condition if surgery is not performed.

- If there is a risk that the patient's condition will rapidly deteriorate if surgery is not done, and there is a threat to life or an extremity or organ system or a threat of permanent dysfunction or disability.

Wednesday, April 1, 2020 (Press Conference)

- Governor Asa Hutchinson directed Arkansas State Parks to implement new measures for public health. In conjunction with Stacy Hurst, secretary of Arkansas Department of Parks, Heritage and Tourism, decision was made to move to a "day use only" operating model. The changes are in effect as of 8 a.m. on Friday, April 3.
- Additionally, the Arkansas Department of Parks, Heritage and Tourism is temporarily implementing safety measures to prevent visitation surges in state parks. Arkansas State Parks will deploy park rangers to enforce social distancing, disperse gatherings of more than 10 people, and implement parking restrictions to limit overcrowding at popular parks.
- Read the governor's press release here: <https://bit.ly/3bHLUwq>. Information on the park changes and policies can be found here: <https://bit.ly/2yoSmdk>.

Tuesday, March 31, 2020 (Press Conference)

- Governor Asa Hutchinson issued an Executive Order suspending provisions requiring in-person witnessing and notarization of legal documents in the State of Arkansas. Read the full Executive Order here: <https://bit.ly/2UCbnSu>.
- DHS Deputy Director Keesa Smith announced that DHS will now accept SNAP applications by phone and waive interviews during the COVID-19 public health emergency. Read the fact sheet here: <https://bit.ly/3bM2N9w>.
- DHS announced today that it will be accelerating quarterly Medicaid access payments to private hospitals. This will release \$85.3 million to these hospitals on Thursday, April 9. Along with this accelerated payment, DHS will also delay collection of hospital access fees until June 15. A credit will also be issued to hospitals for nearly \$9 million due to the increase in the Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP). This will be used to reduce the fees that hospitals owe in the future.
 - Additionally, Medicaid will pay \$41 million in costs settlements this week and expects another \$37.5 million to be paid next week.
 - In total, these accelerated hospital access payments and cost settlement payments will result in an infusion of \$163.8 million to Arkansas hospitals and clinics over the next two weeks.

- These payments are previously budgeted items that DHS is issuing in an accelerated manner in order to ensure that these hospitals can continue to provide care to Arkansans during this critical period.
- The directive for closure of casinos in Arkansas has been extended to April 30 .

Monday, March 30, 2020 (Press Conference)

- The Governor announced that thanks to the creation of the COVID-19 Rainy Day Fund by the General Assembly, the state was able to approve an additional \$45 million for purchase of PPE and ventilators. Read the press release here: <https://bit.ly/3bLjLot>.
- The Governor also announced an Executive Order to create the Arkansas Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act Steering Committee. The committee will be tasked with analyzing the relief available to Arkansas citizens and businesses through the \$1.25 billion anticipated for the state of Arkansas within the federal CARES Act and to make recommendations to the Governor on how to most appropriately use the funds in Arkansas. Read the full Executive Order here: <https://bit.ly/2w2EN2B>.
- The 15-person committee will include the following:
 - Larry Walther, Secretary of DFA
 - Mike Preston, Secretary of Commerce
 - Dr. Nate Smith, Secretary of Health
 - Cindy Gillespie, Secretary of DHS
 - Amy Fecher, Secretary of Transformation and Shared Services
 - Jami Cook, Secretary of Public Safety
 - Elizabeth Smith, Secretary of the Department of Inspector General
 - Johnny Key, Secretary of Education
 - Bill Gossage, Governor's Office Representative
 - o Senator Missy Irvin
 - o Senator David Wallace
 - Senator Will Bond
 - Representative Lane Jean
 - Representative Michelle Gray
 - Representative Fred Allen
- Secretary Stacy Hurst announced that Arkansas State Parks are still open, but additional steps have been taken to protect staff and visitors:
 - Lodges have been closed
 - Camping closed (except for self-contained units such as recreational vehicles)
 - Museums/exhibits closed
 - Contactless check-in for RV camping

- State Parks staff will be monitoring parks and reminding visitors of social distancing requirements.
- DHS has released a FAQ page regarding the Continuity of Care Initiative. Additional avenues are being explored for additional pay to healthcare workers not covered under the Continuity of Care Initiative. The CARES Act provides additional funding to hospitals which should provide additional opportunities for increased pay to front-line healthcare workers during the public health crisis. View the PDF here: <https://bit.ly/2Uw4TUS>.
- Updated information regarding Unemployment Insurance changes in the CARES Act. View the PDF here: <https://bit.ly/2xzzVCy>.
- The Arkansas Department of Health has issued an Advisory for Travelers from New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, New Orleans and International Locations: <https://bit.ly/2UxY9Go>.

Thursday, March 26, 2020 (Press Conference)

- The Secretary of Health, in consultation with the Governor, has sole authority over all instances of quarantine, isolation and restrictions on commerce and travel throughout Arkansas, as necessary and appropriate to control disease in the state of Arkansas as authorized by Ark. Code Ann. §20-7-109-110.
- Through executive order 20-10, Governor Hutchinson has issued a directive prohibiting gatherings of 10 or more people:

“All public and private gatherings of any number of people occurring outside a single household or living unit are subject to the following directives and exceptions:

Due to the high risk of community spread of COVID-19, gatherings of more than ten (10) people in any confined indoor or outdoor space are prohibited until further notice. Gatherings subject to this directive include, without limitation, community, civic, public, leisure, commercial, or sporting events, concerts, conferences, conventions, fundraisers, parades, fairs, and festivals.”

- There are some exceptions noted in the directive, available here: https://governor.arkansas.gov/images/uploads/executiveOrders/EO_20-10_.pdf
- Governor Hutchinson also announced a proposal to protect and support health care professionals, public and providers. Per the press release:

“The Arkansas Department of Human Services is submitting a Medicaid Section 1115 Demonstration Project (“waiver”) to the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to provide support to Arkansans in response to the COVID-19 outbreak.

The waiver will provide \$116 million in additional Medicaid funding to support a number of initiatives to protect Arkansas health care workers and their patients and to support health care providers. Additional funding is aimed at helping the Long-term Services and Supports (LTSS) sector to ensure Arkansas’ vulnerable populations continue to receive care whether they reside in facilities or in their homes. The initiatives also provide additional support to rural hospitals, independent physician practices, and other Medicaid providers struggling as a result of the COVID-19 public health emergency.

This new waiver is just one piece of federal and state efforts to help our hospitals, nursing homes and physicians. Regulatory relief and additional payments to providers will also be provided through federal legislation.”

- Read the full press release for complete details of the funding request: <https://governor.arkansas.gov/news-media/press-releases/governor-hutchinson-announces-proposal-to-protect-and-support-health-care>

Wednesday, March 25, 2020 (Press Conference)

- During his daily press conference, Governor Hutchinson announced an executive order to extend the state individual tax filing deadline due to COVID-19. The deadline has been extended to July 15, 2020.
https://governor.arkansas.gov/images/uploads/executiveOrders/200325_EO_20-09.pdf

Sunday, March 23, 2020 (Press Conference)

Effective March 25, 2020:

- In order to slow the spread of COVID-19, all barbers, body art establishments, body art schools, cosmetology establishments, massage therapy clinics/spas and medical spas should close for in-person operations. Maintaining any related schools’ distance education/learning is acceptable.

This directive to barbers, body art establishments, body art schools, cosmetology establishments, massage therapy clinics/spas and medical spas is made in an attempt to reduce introduction of the virus into new communities and to slow the spread of infection in communities already affected by the virus. This directive and mandate is subject to change as the COVID-19 pandemic progresses.

Read the full directive here: <https://bit.ly/33S7D2f>.

- Following the recommendation of the Arkansas State Board of Dental Examiners and the American Dental Association, an additional directive was made for dentists to

suspend all non-emergent dental care until April 17, 2020. This directive and mandate is subject to change as the COVID-19 pandemic progresses.
Read the full directive here: <https://bit.ly/2xqIXBM>.

Thursday, March 19, 2020 (Press Conference)

Effective Friday, March 20, 2020:

- K-12 schools will remain closed for on-site instruction until April 17, and then re-evaluated based upon public health conditions. Education will continue through alternative methods of instruction.
- State government employees will conduct business through both remote work and on-site work. On-site government work will be limited to personnel necessary for the proper functioning of government. Broad discretion will be given to secretaries to determine what personnel are necessary for the proper functioning of their department.
- Hospitals, clinics and mental health facilities are mandated to screen staff and visitors with temperature and symptom screening.
- Bars and restaurants will be closed for dine-in service but are allowed to remain open for carryout, drive-thru and delivery. Those licensed to sell beer and wine under any permit issued by the Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) may sell corked or sealed bottles of wine to go with the purchase of food. Other specifics will be covered in the directive from ABC. <https://www.dfa.arkansas.gov/news/details/emergency-rule-changes-regarding-the-sale-of-alcoholic-beverages>
- Indoor venues such as gyms are closed to nonessential functions.

In addition, the Governor stressed the following messages to specific constituencies:

Recommendations for Businesses

- Move to telecommuting, video conferencing or remote work whenever possible.
- Implement screening of staff and visitors.
- Enforce social distancing.
- Plan for the future by updating continuity of operations plans.

Recommendations for the General Public

- Older individuals and those with serious medical conditions should stay home to the extent possible. Avoid contact with visitors.
- Avoid social gatherings of more than 10 people.
- Use the drive-thru, carryout and delivery services of local restaurants.
- Avoid unnecessary trips where exposure to large groups is likely.
- Enjoy walking, hiking, fishing and other outdoor activities consistent with social distancing.

- Do not visit nursing homes, retirement centers or long-term care facilities unless you are providing critical assistance.

Wednesday, March 18, 2020 (Press Conference)

Governor Hutchinson announced the following actions being taken to assist businesses and workers needing childcare:

Small Business Assistance: (Please encourage your members to contact AEDC directly about this assistance.)

- The Dept. of Commerce will utilize \$12 million in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to provide assistance to businesses impacted by the public health emergency.
- In addition, the Dept. of Commerce will utilize \$4 million from the Governor's Quick Action Closing Fund to provide bridge loan assistance for businesses impacted by the public health emergency. These loans will be up to \$250,000 per business.
- Governor Hutchinson has requested that the Small Business Administration (SBA) grant an Economic Injury Disaster Loan. The SBA Economic Injury Disaster Loan program has been made available to eligible businesses and private nonprofits that were impacted by the Coronavirus (COVID-19). Any such Economic Injury Disaster Loan assistance declaration issued by the SBA makes loans available to small businesses and private non-profit organizations in designated counties of the state (county by county). SBA's Office of Disaster Assistance will coordinate with the state to submit the request for Economic Injury Disaster Loan Assistance.

If this request is approved, these working capital loans of up to \$2 million can be used to pay fixed debts, payroll and other bills that can't be paid because of the disaster's impact. The interest rate is 3.75% for small businesses without credit available elsewhere; businesses with credit available elsewhere are not eligible. The interest rate for nonprofits is 2.75%. SBA offers loans with long-term repayments in order to keep payments affordable, up to a maximum of 30 years. Terms are determined on a case-by-case basis, based upon each borrower's ability to repay.

- Businesses can find additional information at the following link:
<https://www.arkansasedc.com/covid19>

Childcare/SNAP Assistance: (Please encourage anyone with questions to contact DHS.)

- For childcare voucher providers that remain open through March 27, the Dept. of Human Services will reimburse through claim payment an additional \$10 per infant/toddler, \$7 per preschool, and \$5 school age/out of school time care for children receiving federal childcare assistance through the Child Care Development Block Grant.

- DHS will suspend childcare voucher requirements for 30 days.
- For SNAP benefits, reporting requirements will be waived through the remainder of March and April.
- DHS is posting a map on their website of all 1,200 childcare facilities which remain open at this time. According to DHS, approximately 800 childcare facilities have closed.
<https://humanservices.arkansas.gov/>

Tuesday, March 17, 2020 (Press Conference)

- Governor Hutchinson announced that he has directed the Department of Commerce-Division of Workforce Services to waive a number of restrictions for workers who have lost employment due to the public health emergency to insure that Unemployment Insurance Program (UIP) can provide needed assistance in a timely manner.

The changes are outlined as follows:

- Waive one week waiting period to receive benefits. Unemployed individuals will be able to collect benefits immediately upon application approval rather than the typical week-long waiting period.
- Waive work search requirement for 30 days. Unemployed individuals will not be required to meet job search requirements during this period.
- Waive in-person application requirements. Beginning Friday, unemployed individuals will be able to fulfill the entire application process by calling the ADWS hotline (currently being set up, a number will be pushed out as soon as it becomes available) or by completing the online application at the following link: www.ezarc.adws.arkansas.gov.
- Workers who have become separated from employment as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic should file their unemployment insurance claims through ADWS' online claims filing system EZARC which can be accessed at www.ezarc.adws.arkansas.gov.
- Generally, workers who are laid off due to a business closure or are unable to work due to COVID-19 quarantines will be eligible for unemployment insurance benefits provided they meet the other eligibility requirements. Once an affected worker has filed their claim through EZARC, they should report to their nearest Workforce Center to finalize their unemployment insurance claim. For additional questions related to the Unemployment Insurance program, please contact ADWS Info at 1-855-225-4440 or via email at ADWS.Info@arkansas.gov.
- Contact information for all ADWS offices can be found in the following document: https://www.arml.org/static/arml/ADWS_Office_Contacts.pdf.
- Read the governor's full directive regarding unemployment waivers: https://www.arml.org/static/arml/Unemployment_Insurance_Program_Waivers.pdf.

For additional information regarding health resources, unemployment assistance, assistance for small businesses and emergency response resources, please see the following links:

- Health and Guidance for the Public: Arkansas Department of Health:
https://www.healthy.arkansas.gov/programs-services/topics/novel-coronavirus?_ga=2.177635116.809456673.1584116216-1333483042.1580772836
- Overall Information on State COVID-19 Response/Resources: Arkansas Division of Emergency Management- Joint Information Center:
http://ardem.publishpath.com/Default.aspx?shortcut=external-affairs-educationoutreach&_m=1
- Economic Assistance: Arkansas Department of Commerce COVID-19 Webpage:
<https://www.arkansasedc.com/covid19>
- Online COVID-19 Screening: UAMS- HealthNow Screening Application:
<https://uamshealth.com/coronavirus/>