Unified Government Health Officials Extend Phase 3 of Ad Astra Reopening Plan until at least July 6

Due to a recent rise in the number of COVID-19 cases in Wyandotte County, officials with the Unified Government Public Health Department (UGPHD) announced today that the County will remain in the Phase 3 of the Ad Astra reopening plan through at least July 6, 2020.

“The numbers show that COVID-19 continues to be a threat in our community, and as we have begun reopening our businesses and our communities, it has begun to spread, although slowly, once again,” said Dr. Allen Greiner, Chief Medical Officer with the UGPHD. “Out of an abundance of caution, we will remain in Phase 3 of our reopening plan, with some additional modifications and guidance.”

On June 16, UGPHD officials announced that COVID-19 cases were on the rise in Wyandotte County.

“We look at 7-day rolling averages to track the spread of COVID-19, and make decisions on reopening,” said Greiner. “This gives us a better picture of what’s happening with the virus over time, versus looking at data from a single day. Unfortunately, the data is showing us that COVID-19 is spreading. By staying in Phase 3 for at least an additional two weeks, we can slow and contain this spread.”

This graph highlights 7-day rolling averages from March to mid-June of this year. Note the rise in cases seen in the highlighted area.
“Wyandotte County residents have done a great job helping contain and slow the spread of COVID-19 in our community through shared sacrifice and working together,” said Mayor/CEO David Alvey. “While community health orders have been relaxed significantly in recent weeks, the latest health data shows a rise in cases in Wyandotte County, requiring public health officials to extend Phase 3 of the Ad Astra state plan instead of transitioning to a full Phase Out on June 22nd. The latest health data is disappointing. We must remember that the pathway out of this is in our hands if we continue practicing safe social distancing, wear face coverings whenever possible, and adhere to all public health guidelines. By doing so, we not only protect our most vulnerable, we preserve all that we’ve achieved over the last several months and expedite our community’s return to business as usual.”

**Phase 3 Continues, with Modifications for Long-Term Care**

Phase 3 of the Ad Astra reopening plan began in Wyandotte County on June 8th. This phase of the reopening plan allows for further loosening of restrictions on individuals and businesses compared to Phase 2, but with some restrictions still in place.

Most of the Phase 3 restrictions will remain the same as the Phase is extended, with the notable exception of changes to restrictions for long-term care facilities. Up to this point, visits to these facilities have been prohibited. Under the modified Phase 3 extension, long-term care and assisted living facilities may allow limited numbers of visitors in their facilities once they have developed a visitation plan, which must be approved by the Unified Government Public Health Department.

“After seeing a large long-term care facility outbreak in our community, the Wyandotte County Long-Term Care Facility Task Force has developed robust guidance, and has been in direct communication with each long-term care and assisted living facility in our County about this guidance,” said Dr. Erin Corriveau, Deputy Medical Officer with the UGPHD. “Our long-term care facilities are much more prepared now to respond if any cases arise at their site, and have worked diligently with the Health Department to address questions or concerns as soon as they arise. Social isolation has taken a serious toll on the residents of these facilities, and it’s important that we take that into account. We feel that it is appropriate to allow some visits to happen at these facilities, mostly outside and under very strict guidelines, and so long as the facility has their plan approved by the UG Public Health Department.”

Phase 3 will remain the same for other businesses and activities. All businesses may reopen, and all education, activities, venues and establishments can operate, as long as they follow these guidelines:

- Gatherings of up to 45 people are allowed. Gatherings of more than 45 people should be avoided.
- Everyone is encouraged to wear masks or cloth face coverings in public settings.
- People should maintain at least six feet of distance between themselves and others in public (not including people who live together).
- For employers and business owners, encourage employees and customers to always wear masks in your place of business, and allow for proper social distancing in all business areas such as retail shopping areas, business office settings and restaurants.
- Swimming pools are allowed to open, with social distancing and no more than 45 people on site at a time. Please note that UG Parks & Recreation pools and spray parks will remain closed.
• Summer camps, fairs, festivals and outdoor activities can reopen as long as they can maintain at least six feet of distance between individuals or groups, beyond 45 individuals and at 50% or less of fire marshal approved capacity.

**Businesses and Individuals Can Help**

According to UGPHD officials, both businesses and individuals play an important role in once again slowing and containing the spread of COVID-19 in Wyandotte County.

**What Businesses Can Do**

It is the responsibility of businesses reopening in Phase 3 to keep their employees and visitors as safe as possible from COVID-19. Businesses need to:

- Ensure social distancing (at least six feet) between individuals and groups who do not share a household. This may include steps such as installing partitions between patrons or employees, modifying employee work areas or work schedules, or marking spots on the floor six feet apart where people will be waiting in line.
- Ask that employees wear masks or cloth face coverings and encourage customers to do the same.
- Educate employees on how to properly wear a mask (ensuring it covers both the nose and mouth at all times – see below for more details).
- If employees become sick, especially with COVID-19 symptoms, they should stay home except to get tested for COVID-19 at a local testing site.


**What Individuals Can Do**

**Wearing Masks or Cloth Face Coverings**

The UGPHD strongly recommends that anyone over the age of two wear a cloth face covering while in public. UGPHD staff offer the following tips about masks and cloth face coverings:

- Wear a mask or cloth face covering appropriately (it must cover both your mouth and nose)
- Don't touch your mask or your face. If you need to adjust your mask, clean your hands with soap and water or hand sanitizer before and after touching your mask.
- Cloth face coverings that you can make with items around your home are effective at helping reduce the spread of COVID-19. You do not need a surgical mask or other medical-grade mask, and it is best to reserve those supplies for healthcare workers.
- Learn about cloth face covering recommendations, including how to make your own mask at home, at cdc.gov/COVID19
- The primary purpose of mask is to protect others in case you may be carrying the virus, even if you don't have symptoms. If we all wear masks, we are all helping protect one another, and especially protect those most vulnerable to serious illness.

Remember: wearing a mask is **not** a substitute for social distancing or excellent hygiene. The combination of different safety precautions is how we can best stop the spread of COVID-19.

**Social Distancing**

- Maintain a distance of at least six feet between yourself and anyone who does not live in your household.
- You may need to modify aspects of your routine to do this, such as not carpooling with people outside of your household.
- Remember to wear a mask or cloth face covering for additional protection, even when six feet apart.
Social Gatherings
• Under Phase 3, social gatherings are limited to no more than 45 people.
• In addition to keeping the number of people to no more than 45, social distancing of six feet or more should be maintained.

If You Get Sick, or You Are Exposed to COVID-19, Get Tested!
• You should get tested for COVID-19 if:
  o You develop any symptoms of COVID-19, such as:
    o Fever
    o Dry cough
    o Shortness of breath/difficulty breathing
    o Headache
    o Chills
    o Muscle/body aches
    o Runny nose
    o Sore throat
    o Diarrhea
    o New loss of taste or smell
  o You have been exposed to COVID-19 through close contact (within six feet for at least ten minutes) with someone who has tested positive or through association with a known outbreak

Testing is available for free to people who live or work in Wyandotte County at multiple community locations, including the UGPHD and a rotating weekly schedule of “pop-up” sites coordinated by the Wyandotte County Health Equity Task Force. Find the latest testing schedule and locations at wycokck.org/COVID-19 or by calling 3-1-1.

Remember: You May Be Able to Spread the Virus Even without Symptoms
Local Health Officials remind Wyandotte County residents that asymptomatic spread may be possible, and that safety precautions should be taken even if you do not have symptoms.

“Even if you don’t have symptoms right now, you may still be able to infect others,” said Dr. Erin Corriveau, Deputy Medical Officer with the UGPHD. “Recently, someone from the World Health Organization mistakenly said that asymptomatic spread is unlikely, then quickly retracted the statement because there is not adequate scientific evidence to support that claim. Unfortunately, this misinformation spread widely. In fact, we do see evidence that people who develop symptoms can be infectious up to two days before their symptoms start. This is why it is so important for everyone to wear masks and practice social distancing, even if they feel well.”

You can find additional data and resources on COVID-19 in Wyandotte County by going to wycokck.org/COVID-19 or by calling 3-1-1.

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