

Guidance for Using Public Health Mitigation Measures

This document provides a framework for data elements to consider when implementing or discontinuing public health mitigation measures for COVID-19. This guidance is subject to change as new information about COVID-19 is incorporated. The Iowa Department of Public Health is evaluating these metrics on a daily basis and encourages cities, counties, health systems and others to continue their dialogue with IDPH on what metrics are used and what they mean for each community.

Social Distancing & Mitigation ALREADY in Place in Iowa as of 3/26/20:

- Schools closed for four weeks starting 3/15/20
- Non-essential businesses closed; Bars, restaurants, fitness centers, theaters, casinos, mass gatherings of 10+, senior citizen centers, salons, medical spas, barbershops, tattoo shops, tanning, massage, swimming pools, florists, and various non-essential retail stores such as: book, clothing, shoe, jewelry, luggage, cosmetic, beauty, perfume, furniture, and home furnishing stores.
- State Universities using online learning for rest of semester and residence halls closed
- State of Iowa's workforce is now close to 70% telework, other businesses encouraged to do the same
- Iowa Department of Corrections, Iowa Veteran's Home, and the Department of Human Services have stopped all visitation at facilities, and CMS guidelines have instructed all Long Term Care facilities to do the same.

Many of the Shelter-in-Place orders that have been implemented in other states cover what is already being done in Iowa. Given the patchwork of exemptions most states have appropriately used in building their Shelter-In-Place orders, Iowa's approach is both comparable and in many cases, stronger. Minnesota, for example, exempts 78% of jobs from the Governor's order to shelter in place.

Considerations for Implementing Mitigation Measures and Shelter-in-Place:

Iowa Specific Information:

- Population distribution is not nearly as dense per acre as in other states hit hard by COVID19, ie New York and New Jersey
- No mass public transit system, which can serve as a major source of transmission
- Fewer large apartment buildings with thousands of people living
- Iowa alone produces 1/11th of the nation's food supply and is home to 31 of the largest 100 food manufacturers in the world, playing a central role in the nation's food supply
- Iowa has the fourth highest concentration of manufacturing employees of any state in the nation, producing critical supplies, such as food production, emergency vehicles, medical instruments and devices, heavy machinery, and more.

Other Questions to consider:

- Assess whether social distancing recommendations are currently being followed in your community.
- Are there additional measures that you can take to enhance community compliance with public health recommendations?
 - Are community leaders united in messages to the community?
 - Are community leaders united in their instruction of mildly ill community members to stay home vs reporting to a healthcare provider and seeking unnecessary testing?
 - Are there specific tools within the community which will ensure social distancing is practiced?
- Consider strategy to ensure the supply chain remains intact for critical infrastructure, particularly the healthcare sector.
- Consider the legal authorities required for issuing orders and any associated responsibilities for providing care/food/resources.
- Develop a plan for enforcement and duration of orders/measures.
- Develop a plan providing essential mental health services across the demographics of your community during and after a shelter-in-place order.

Metrics to Consider*:

- **Percent of population greater than 65 years of age**, to provide an assessment of the vulnerable community members in a population.
- **Percent of identified cases requiring hospitalization**, to inform the severity of case patients in a population.
- **Rate of infection per 100,000 population in the past 14 days**, to inform the number of cases in the community.
- **Long term care outbreaks**, to inform clusters of illness among a vulnerable population in a shared community setting.

**Local Public Health officials can work with the Iowa Department of Public Health to obtain this information and receive technical assistance in evaluating relevant data.*