



Office of the Governor
JB Pritzker

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Gov. Pritzker Announces Extension of Stay at Home Order, Suspension of On-Site Learning in Schools Through April

Chicago – Building on the state’s efforts to flatten the curve of new COVID-19 cases in Illinois and following careful consultation with experts in Illinois and across the nation, Governor JB Pritzker announced that he will sign a 30-day extension of the state’s disaster proclamation on April 1. The disaster proclamation provides the governor the authority to sign additional executive orders, extending the Stay at Home order and suspending on-site learning in K-12 schools through the month of April.

“I have let the science guide our decisions and I’ve relied upon the top medical experts, scientists, public health researchers, epidemiologists, mathematicians and modelers, from the greatest institutions in the world whose guidance on infection rates and potential mortalities and protective measures is second to none,” **said Governor JB Pritzker**. “Illinois has one of the strongest public health systems in the nation – but even so, we aren’t immune to this virus’ ability to push our existing capacity beyond its limit. We need to maintain our course and keep working to flatten the curve.”

“This may not be the measure that we like, but it is the measure we all need to combat the deadly and growing COVID-19 crisis,” **said Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot**. “The City of Chicago fully supports Governor Pritzker’s bold and necessary extension of the Stay at Home Order, and stands ready to partner with the State and our health officials as we navigate the challenges that lie ahead in safeguarding our residents. We will get through this crisis together and I want to thank all those who have been doing their part.”

EXTENSION OF STAY AT HOME ORDER

On March 20, the Governor announced a Stay at Home order after consulting with medical experts, scientists, public health researchers, epidemiologists, mathematicians and modelers to understand the progression of COVID-19 and the measures needed to flatten the curve.

The extension of the Stay at Home order will continue to permit a range of essential activities that will allow Illinoisans to meet their necessities while maintaining social distance from others. Grocery stores, gas stations, pharmacies and other businesses providing services deemed essential will not close.

Staying at home and social distancing are the paramount strategies for minimizing the spread of COVID-19 in our communities. Every Illinoisan plays a role in ensuring our health care system remains fully operational to treat patients in need of urgent care.

As of March 30, preliminary reports from hospitals statewide show that 41 percent of our adult ICU beds are “empty”, which means they are staffed and ready for immediate patient use, a two-percentage point decrease in a week. As far as ventilators, 68% are available statewide across Illinois, a four-percentage point drop in a week.

Statewide, about 35 percent of our total ICU beds are occupied by COVID patients and about 24 percent of our total ventilators are occupied by COVID patients. The state remains within its capacity, and is working every day to increase its capacity to prepare for an anticipated surge in hospitalizations related to COVID-19 in the coming weeks.

Those experiencing symptoms should call a health care provider who will help arrange medical treatment without putting others at risk of exposure. The Illinois Department of Public Health has a statewide COVID-19 hotline and website to answer any questions from the public or to report a suspected case: call 1-800-889-3931 or visit IDPH.illinois.gov.

SUSPENSION OF ON-SITE LEARNING

On March 13, the Governor announced a temporary statewide closure of all K-12 schools to minimize spread of COVID-19 across communities. Child care providers who have been licensed to operate to provide care to the children of essential workers will remain open.

Schools will transition from Act of God Days to Remote Learning Days, with days counting toward the school year. Each school district will create and implement a Remote Learning Day Plan to ensure all students, including students with disabilities and English Learners, receive instructional materials and can communicate with their teachers.

To prepare, the Illinois School Board of Education (ISBE) assembled an advisory group of more than 60 educators to make recommendations about instruction and grading during remote learning.

Schools can use up to five Remote Learning Planning Days at any time to prepare and refine their approaches to remote learning. Schools will design plans to minimize instructional loss and to provide opportunities for students' academic, linguistic, and social-emotional growth.

Remote learning will look different for every district and every school. School districts will create plans based on their local resources and needs. Most districts will use a mix of digital and non-digital methods of engaging students in learning.

As a part of their recommendations, the advisory group recommended that grades be used only to increase students' academic standing with a recommendation that any grades that schools give during this time be used as an opportunity for feedback and not an instrument for compliance.

ISBE will continue to work in partnership with school districts to address any questions and to provide guidance to educators and administrators to protect and support Illinois students.

Illinois schools have worked diligently to meet the challenges created by the COVID-19 pandemic with generosity, creativity, and a resolute focus on caring for students and communities. Schools across Illinois have shown remarkable agility in providing learning opportunities and meals throughout this crisis and will continue to work to address students' needs.

“As we all come together to stay at home and out of harm's way, we must never forget the selfless service of Illinoisans on the frontlines of this pandemic: our health care workers, first responders, grocery workers, child care providers, letter carriers, tradesmen and women, and so many more. They are going to work to serve and protect us, putting themselves and their families at great personal risk, because they have a job to do. Their sacrifices are real and meaningful, and we should all take time to think about them and thank them for keeping up the fight. We will all get through this together,” **said Tim Drea, President of the Illinois AFL-CIO.**

“I stand with the governor, in full partnership with his team, as we – the local elected officials from across our state – fully cooperate to administer the various compliance and enforcement components of your executive orders,” **said Brad Cole, Executive Director of the Illinois Municipal League.** “The faster we seriously comply with the executive orders, the faster we will be able to slow and stop the spread of this virus, and the faster we will then be able to turn-on the economic engines of Illinois communities, from small to large.”

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