

## Governor extends stay-at-home to Monday, May 4

**Wednesday, April 8:** To continue Minnesota's success in slowing the spread of COVID-19 across the state, Gov. Tim Walz extended the stay-at-home order until Monday, May 4.

"What we are doing is working, Minnesota," said Walz. "We are taking this seriously, and we are staying home. While Minnesota is showing lower rates of infections than our peers across the country, now is not the time to let up or allow that trajectory to change. Updated federal guidance and our own public health experts are showing that if we keep staying home, we will save lives – which is why I made the data-driven decision to extend the stay-home order until Monday, May 4."

The governor's stay-at-home order is forecasted to significantly slow the spread of COVID-19, pushing out the peak of the disease and allowing the state to continue key preparations for the pandemic. These preparations include building new hospital capacity and buying ventilators and masks, planning for how to protect those most at risk, expanding testing, and freeing up time for health care giants like the Mayo Clinic to develop critical treatments for the virus. The stay-at-home order is now extended to 11:59 p.m. on Sunday, May 3.

Consistent with the extended stay-at-home order, Executive Order 20-33 also extends the closure of bars, restaurants, and other public accommodations through 11:59 p.m. on Sunday, May 3, and outlines exemptions to the stay-at-home order, including exempted activities and critical sector workers.

"We're facing an historic public health crisis, and Minnesotans are rising to the challenge," Minnesota Department of Health commissioner Jan Malcolm said. "The social distancing and community mitigation efforts Gov. Walz implemented have secured us much-needed time to prepare more fully for the predicted peak in cases, and today's announcement gives us a better chance to save even more lives. We are thankful for the tremendous effort and sacrifices Minnesotans are making."

### President Trump approves disaster declaration for state

**Tuesday, April 7:** Following a Sunday, April 5, letter from Gov. Tim Walz, President Donald Trump declared a major disaster in the State of Minnesota and ordered federal assistance to help mitigate the pandemic's impact on public health, state resources, unemployment, and community infrastructure such as health care facilities. "It's going to take all of us to come together to fight COVID-19," said Walz. "We're working closely with our partners at both the local and federal levels to ensure we protect Minnesotans' health and wellbeing during this pandemic."

On Friday, March 13, Walz declared a peacetime emergency in Minnesota, and the president declared a nationwide emergency due to COVID-19. On Friday, March 20, Walz signed a COVID-19 agreement with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), permitting FEMA to provide Minnesota with federal emergency relief funds. This approval will unlock individual assistance programs for Minnesota. It will provide authorization for funding to support crisis counseling, supplemental nutrition programs, medical assistance, funeral assistance, legal services, and statewide hazard mitigation.

### Minnesota issues first \$600 payments under CARES

**Wednesday, April 8:** The Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) announced that the agency received final guidance from the U.S. Department of Labor to be one of the first states to make \$600 additional compensation payments to people receiving unemployment benefits. These payments were authorized by Congress in the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act), which was signed into law on Friday, March 27.

"As soon as the CARES Act became law, our team at DEED got to work putting the technology in place to support these payments and ensure that we were ready to get the money to Minnesotans in need," said commissioner Steve Grove. "With a record number of unemployment applications, we know this is an uncertain and challenging time for many. It was critical that we act swiftly and provide this additional compensation without delay."

All individuals who are currently receiving Minnesota unemployment benefits will qualify for the \$600 additional compensation and will continue to receive their regular unemployment benefit.

What Minnesotans need to know:

- The first week for which you can get the additional \$600 is the week beginning Sunday, March 29.
- You could request the week of Sunday, March 29, on or after Sunday, April 5. If you already requested payment for that week, you will get the \$600 payment automatically.
- You do not need to contact DEED or do anything to get the additional \$600. DEED will automatically process the additional \$600 payment AFTER you request benefits for the week of Sunday, March 29 (and every week after that you are eligible).
- You will not see the \$600 payment on your online unemployment account. You will only see it on your bank account or your unemployment debit card statement.
- Payments may take a few days to reach your bank/debit card.

Under the extended order, Minnesotans may leave their residences only to perform the following activities, and while doing so, they should practice social distancing:

- Relocation to ensure safety, such as relocating to a different location if your home is unsafe due to domestic violence, sanitation, or reasons related to essential operations.
- Health and safety activities, such as obtaining emergency services or medical supplies.
- Outdoor activities, such as walking, hiking, running, biking, hunting, or fishing.
- Necessary supplies and services, such as getting groceries, gasoline, or carry-out.
- Essential intrastate and interstate travel, such as returning to a home from outside this state.
- Care of others, such as caring for a family member, friend, or pet in another household.
- Displacement, such as moving between emergency shelters if you are without a home.
- Moving or relocation, such as moving to a new home or place of residence.
- Voting, including all local and state elections.
- Funerals, provided that no more than ten attendees are gathered and strict social distancing is enforced.
- Tribal activities and lands, such as activities by members within the boundaries of their tribal reservation.

Executive Order 20-33 also orders that all workers who can work from home must do so. Workers in critical sectors who cannot work from home are permitted to go to work.

Guidance related to critical sectors is available at <http://mn.gov/deed/critical/>.

The governor's Executive Order will have the full force and effect of law upon approval by the executive council.

Updates on the COVID-19 pandemic in Minnesota are available at [www.mn.gov/covid19/](http://www.mn.gov/covid19/). Frequently asked questions are available here: <https://mn.gov/covid19/faq/>.

### State awards \$50 million in emergency health care grants

**Wednesday, April 8:** The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) has awarded \$50 million in emergency health care grants to nearly 350 provider organizations across the state for preparing for and responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.

MDH awarded grants to a variety of providers including ambulance services, health care clinics, tribal health organizations, pharmacies, hospitals, assisted living facilities and health systems. MDH received more than 1,600 grant requests for the available \$50 million, requesting a total of more than \$300 million. Providers most commonly applied for funding to cover staffing costs, equipment and supplies, including personal protective equipment.

The largest grants went to: Fairview Health Services (\$5 million), Hennepin County Medical Center (\$5 million), HealthPartners (\$4 million), Allina Health System (\$3.5 million); Essentia Health (\$3 million); St. Luke's Hospital in Duluth (\$3 million); North Memorial Health (\$1.5 million); CentraCare Health (\$1 million); and Children's Minnesota (\$1 million). The Meeker County Hospital received \$75,000.

"With these grants, providers can start using these funds as quickly as possible to prepare for delivering care to COVID-19 patients and be ready for the many challenges this pandemic places on Minnesota's health care system," said Minnesota Department of Health commissioner Jan Malcolm.

MDH reviewed grant applications and considered multiple factors in ranking requests by highest priority, including the urgency of need and ability to spend these resources swiftly. Reviewers also considered whether other funding sources were becoming available to meet certain needs; for example, nursing home applicants were encouraged to apply for expedited reimbursement through the Minnesota Department of Human Services, but will be able to apply for funds in future rounds to meet needs that cannot be met through that source. MDH also considered and tried to balance the total needs of the health care sector across the state. The grant amounts ranged in size from a few hundred dollars to \$5 million.

In March, the Minnesota Legislature passed an emergency health care law authorizing a \$200 million investment in the health care system to respond to COVID-19. The funding for this initial \$50 million round of emergency grants was added to an existing public health response contingency account, with instructions from the legislature to focus on helping relieve costs that are necessary on an emergency basis for addressing the COVID-19 outbreak.

The Minnesota Department of Health will soon be taking applications for the additional \$150 million the legislature approved as a new health care response fund to help providers prepare for and respond to the outbreak. Providers can use the money to fund staffing costs, to establish temporary sites to provide testing or treatment services, to expand the number of beds available for COVID-19 treatment, for isolating affected patients or staff, and to support emergency transportation. Grants can also fund temporary information technology systems to support triage, screening, and telemedicine. In addition, providers can use the funds for personal protective equipment, testing and other supplies and ICU equipment, among other things. A full list of eligible expenses will be included in the application, which should open within the next week.