

Governor extends stay-at-home order to May 18

Thursday, April 30: As the state continues to make progress in preparing for the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic, Gov. Tim Walz extended the stay-at-home order in Minnesota until Monday, May 18.

In an effort to get more Minnesotans back to work safely while the order remains in effect, the governor announced that retail businesses and other non-critical businesses can resume operations with curbside pick-up. “From building out critical hospital capacity to launching a landmark testing strategy, Minnesota has made meaningful progress in preparing for the worst of the COVID-19 pandemic,” Walz said. “Minnesotans have made this possible by staying home and holding down the rate of infection. But now is not the time for sudden movements. There’s more work to be done, and we need to keep this virus at a simmer, not a boil. Our action today prioritizes the safety of Minnesotans while taking cautious, strategic steps toward getting people safely back to work.”

Also as part of his executive order on Thursday, April 30, Walz strongly encouraged all Minnesotans to wear a manufactured or homemade mask at all times when they leave their homes to any place where social distancing is difficult.

“Minnesotans look out for one another; we’re asking that they continue to protect their neighbors and slow the spread of this virus,” said lieutenant governor Peggy Flanagan. “We must continue to stay home, practice safe social distancing, and wear cloth masks while in public, so we can carefully and responsibly turn the dial toward reopening society.”

By extending the stay-at-home order, the governor said the state will: slow the spread of COVID-19 and slowly build herd immunity; protect those working on the front lines by increasing access to personal protective equipment; ensure our health system can care for all who require care; gradually allow more Minnesotans to return to work; and safely and slowly resume in-person contacts and other activities that are critical for our well-being.

“Our public health workers are putting in a tremendous effort to protect people from this terrible pandemic, and Minnesotans across the state have stepped up to help by following the social distancing guidelines and slowing the spread,” Minnesota Department of Health commissioner Jan Malcolm

said. “The governor’s extension of the stay-at-home order gives us a better chance to limit the impacts of this pandemic. It buys us more time to trace and isolate cases, and to work upstream to prevent infections from jumping into new and vulnerable groups. More time means more lives saved.”

Starting Monday, May 4, retail businesses and other non-critical businesses may begin offering curbside pick-up. This will put up to 30,000 Minnesotans back to work in a safe, coordinated way. Businesses must:

- Develop and publicly post a plan for how to open safely.
- Use online payment whenever possible.
- Employees and customers should wear masks and protective equipment.
- In curbside pick-up scenarios, social distancing guidelines apply. If possible, customers should not leave their vehicle.
- In delivery scenarios, items should be deposited outside a customer’s residence.

Minnesotans should also continue to telework whenever possible, wear face masks in public, screen for symptoms and regularly check their temperature, and maintain physical distance from each other.

“Listening to Minnesota business and labor leaders on how to ensure the safety of workers and customers is at the core of our decision-making process,” said Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development Commissioner Steve Grove. “Today’s announcement is the right next step to help more Minnesotans safely return to work and to reopen more businesses to get our economy ramping up again.”

In the time Minnesotans have bought by staying home, since Friday, March 27, Minnesota has: announced a landmark testing strategy that will allow the state to complete up to 20,000 tests a day and test every symptomatic Minnesotan; built hospital capacity and finalized a lease on an alternate care site to make sure that all Minnesotans who need care can receive it; and worked to acquire more personal protective equipment to protect our frontline workers.

Updates on the COVID-19 pandemic in Minnesota are available at <https://mn.gov/covid19/>.

Frequently asked questions are available here: <https://mn.gov/covid19/faq/>.

Minnesota Historical Society to document COVID-19 stories

Friday, April 24: COVID-19 is a global pandemic in a world that’s more interconnected than ever. In an effort to document this historic time and to help people make connections, the Minnesota Historical Society is asking Minnesotans to share their experiences about how COVID-19 is impacting their lives and how they are responding. “COVID-19 is affecting every Minnesotan. Each of us has a personal story to share. One hundred years from now, people will want to know how we responded to this crisis,” said Kent Whitworth, CEO and director of the Minnesota Historical Society. “This is a chance to write part of our state’s history and help inform future generations about how Minnesotans persevered in the face of great challenges.”

Everyone is invited to contribute experiences and share images and videos at www.mnhs.org/historyisnow. The Minnesota Historical Society will share submissions through a new “History is Now” blog, which will be updated weekly, and on the Minnesota Historical Society social media channels. In addition, it will add a selection of submissions to its collections to be preserved for future generations.

“My daughter is a cashier/bagger at a Minneapolis grocery store. ...Folks look out for each other to the best of their ability, but it is still a stressful job. I sewed her masks, and she gave some to coworkers. I’ll sew some more and send them again.” community contributor from Minneapolis.

“Longing. I have a new granddaughter, our first, and I want to be there to help her parents who are working, but yet not expose her. I take extensive precautions when I visit her and otherwise have no public exposure.” community contributor from West St. Paul.

“My home town, Cloquet, burned to the ground in Oct. 1918. ...My grandmother, Anna Dufault Lemieux, said that she escaped the flames by taking a train to Superior, Wis., and waited it out. Bit by bit Cloquet recovered. I never asked grandma how she avoided the 1918 flu. Now more than 100 years later, her grandchildren cope with a similar threat. ...I mourn the country’s loss of life, as elderly Americans especially fall victim to this illness. And I mourn the business losses, and the dip in retirement savings on my 401K. Yet as a people we’ve climbed from financial disasters before and will again, the same way a little northern town emerged from ashes.” community contributor from St. Paul.

Through this collections effort, the day-to-day experiences, stories, artifacts, and recollections will become the primary sources for future generations.

The Minnesota Historical Society is a nonprofit educational and cultural institution established in 1849. It collects, preserves, and tells the story of Minnesota’s past through museum exhibits, libraries and collections, historic sites, educational programs, and publishing. Visit it at www.mnhs.org.

“Call to Mind” makes guide for mental health available

Thursday, April 2: In response to the widespread change induced by COVID-19 in our daily lives, American Public Media has launched “Call to Mind,” an initiative to foster new conversations about mental health and a site dedicated to mental wellness resources. The site – www.calltomindnow.org – includes extensive resources and blog posts from trusted public health and mental health organizations including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the World Health Organization, the National Alliance on Mental Illness, Mental Health America, and others.

These tips and recommendations have been compiled with the goal of reaching individuals where they’re at with ways to cope and manage their mental well-being in this uncertain time. This is a toolkit for everyone: media outlets covering coronavirus and compiling resources for audiences, organizations looking to support their employees, and individuals seeking tools to aid their mental wellness.

Topics covered in www.calltomindnow.org include:

- Self-care during the pandemic;
- Coping with stress and anxiety during COVID-19;
- Dealing with loneliness and isolation;
- Talking with kids about COVID-19;
- Digital distractions;
- Living with your mental illness;
- How to get help;
- Resources if you are in a crisis.

“So many of us have had our lives upturned by the presence of COVID-19 in our communities. It’s important to prioritize physical health, but this pandemic’s effect on our mental health cannot be ignored,” said Babette Apland, managing director of Call to Mind. “This new source of stress, compiled with isolation, can lead to anxiety and loneliness for many of us, and can exacerbate illness for people already dealing with a mental health condition,” continued Apland. “The goal with our site is to have one place with trusted information on ways to cope and how to seek help if you need it.”

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