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Opening America Again: President Trump's Plan for Our Country

If you have any questions regarding COVID-19, please do not hesitate to contact our Carr Allison COVID-19 Response Team.

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Carr Allison COVID-19 Response Team

As of 5/7/2020

In response to increasing anxiety throughout the country related to business shutdowns and the economic impact of COVID-19, President Trump announced plans to help reopen America.[i] The plan is not an encouragement to return to the "old normal" quickly. Rather, it is a strategic plan for reopening America in phases. The responsibility for determining when each state is ready to proceed through the phased reopening process has been left to each state's governor.

Gating Criteria

Before considering reopening at all, the first recommendation is that states meet certain "Gating Criteria." In addition, before moving through the subsequent phases of the plan, states should ensure, once again, that of the following criteria are met:

- **Symptoms**
  - Downward trajectory of influenza-like illnesses reported within a 14-day period

  AND
  - Downward trajectory of COVID-like syndromic cases reported within a 14-day period
- **Cases**
  - Downward trajectory of documented cases within a 14-day period

  OR
  - Downward trajectory of COVID-like syndromic cases reported within a 14-day period
- **Hospitals**
  - All patients should be treated without crisis care

  AND
  - Robust testing programs should be in place for at-risk healthcare workers, including the emerging antibody testing.

State Preparedness Responsibilities

Each state has been charged with the following:

- **Testing and Contact Tracing**

  States should be able to do the following:
  - Quickly set up safe and efficient screening and testing sites for individuals who are symptomatic for COVID-19 and trace the identity of others with whom the individuals who tested positive have come in contact,
  - Have the ability to test individuals who exhibit COVID-19 symptoms and trace the contacts of the individuals who tested positive, and
  - Ensure that sentinel surveillance sites are screening for asymptomatic cases and identify contacts for individuals who tested positive for COVID-19. Sentinel surveillance sites should operate from locations that serve more vulnerable populations.[ii]

[i] https://www.whitehouse.gov/openingamerica/

[ii] Vulnerable individuals are defined as 1) elderly people or 2) individuals with a serious underlying health condition such as high blood pressure, chronic lung disease, diabetes, obesity, asthma or those with a compromised immune system.

- **Healthcare System Capacity**
  - States should be able to quickly and independently supply sufficient personal protective equipment as well as critical medical equipment that would be needed if a dramatic surge in cases occurs and requires such.
  - States should also have sufficient ICU capacity to respond to an increased need in the event a surge occurs.
- **Plans**
  - Plans must be in place to protect the health and safety of the following:
    - Workers in critical industries,
    - Individuals living or working in higher risk facilities, and
    - Employees and users of mass transit.
  - States should have a sufficient plan in place to advise citizens of the need for social distancing and using face coverings.
  - Conditions must be monitored and steps must be taken immediately to limit or mitigate rebounds or outbreaks, including putting more stringent protective measures back in place.

Individual and Employer Responsibilities

Guidelines have been put in place for individuals and employers that should be carried out in every phase of re-opening. Individuals in every state have been instructed to do the following:

- Wash their hands with soap and water, or use hand sanitizer if soap is not available, particularly after touching items or surfaces that are frequently used by others,
- Avoid touching their face,
- Sneeze or cough into a tissue or the inside of their elbow,
- Disinfect frequently used surfaces and items,
- Consider using face coverings while in public,
- Stay home if they feel sick, and
- Seek appropriate medical attention when necessary and follow the advice of medical professionals.

Employers have been instructed to:

- Develop and implement policies regarding:
  - Social distancing,
  - The use of personal protective equipment,
  - Employee temperature checks,
  - Testing, isolating and contact tracing for symptomatic employees,
  - Contact tracing for employees who test positive for COVID-19,
  - Sanitation,
  - Disinfecting the workplace, particularly common-use or high-traffic areas, and
  - Restricting business travel.
- Monitor the workforce for individuals who are symptomatic for COVID-19 and do not allow them to return to work unless they have been tested and cleared by a medical provider.

Phase One

When states have met the gating criteria initially, they may proceed with Phase One of reopening. During this phase, individuals, employers and unique venues all have responsibilities.

- Individuals
  - Vulnerable individuals should continue to stay home. Household members of vulnerable populations should be cautioned about the risks of taking coronavirus home and should consider isolating themselves.
  - All individuals should practice social distancing when in public around individuals not in the same household.
  - Social situations that cannot practically be limited to 10 or fewer individuals should generally be avoided.
  - Non-essential travel should be minimized.
- Employers
  - Teleworking should be encouraged whenever possible.
  - Returning the workforce should be accomplished in phases.
  - Common areas where employees are likely to congregate should be closed or, if not possible, strict social distancing measures should be enforced.
  - Non-essential travel should be minimized.
  - Vulnerable members of the workforce should be given special accommodations, whenever possible.
- Schools and organized activities such as daycares or camps that are closed should remain closed.
- Hospital and senior living facility visits should be prohibited. Individuals who must interact with residents and patients must be required to adhere to very strict hygiene protocol.
- Venues where large numbers of people gather such as restaurants, movie theaters, sporting venues and churches may only operate under strict physical distancing protocols.
- Elective surgeries may resume on an outpatient basis.
- Gyms may reopen if strict physical distancing is enforced and stringent sanitation protocols are followed.
- Bars are instructed to remain closed.

Phase Two

Once the gating criteria have been met for the second time and there is no evidence of a rebound, states may proceed to Phase Two. As with Phase One, individuals, employers and unique venues all have responsibilities.

- Individuals
  - Vulnerable individuals should continue to stay home. Household members of vulnerable populations should be cautioned about the risks of taking coronavirus home and should consider isolating themselves.
  - All individuals should practice social distancing when in public around individuals not in the same household.

    - Social situations involving more than 50 people in which social distancing is not practical should be avoided unless precautionary measures can be established and followed.
    - Non-essential travel may resume.
- Employers
    - Teleworking should be encouraged whenever possible.
    - Common areas where employees are likely to congregate should be closed or moderate social distancing measures should be enforced.
    - Non-essential travel may resume.
    - Vulnerable members of the workforce should be given special accommodations, whenever possible.
- Schools and organized activities such as daycares or camps may reopen.
- Hospital and senior living facility visits should be prohibited. Individuals who must interact with residents and patients must be required to adhere to very strict hygiene protocol.
- Venues where large numbers of people gather such as restaurants, movie theaters, sporting venues and churches may operate under moderate physical distancing protocols.
- Elective surgeries may resume on an outpatient and inpatient basis.
- Gyms may reopen if strict physical distancing is enforced and stringent sanitation protocols are followed.
- Bars are able to operate with lowered standing-room occupancy.

Phase Three

Once the gating criteria have been met for a third time and there is no evidence of a rebound, states may proceed to Phase Three. As with Phase One and Phase Two, individuals, employers and unique venues all have responsibilities.

- Individuals
    - Vulnerable individuals may resume public interaction but should follow physical distancing. If distancing is not possible, interaction should be avoided unless other preventative measures are taken.
    - The remaining population should consider limiting the amount of time they spend in crowds.
- Employers
    - Unrestricted work environments may resume.
- Hospital and senior living facility visits may resume. Diligent hygiene protocols should be required for individuals who interact with residents or patients.
- Venues where large numbers of people gather such as restaurants, movie theaters, sporting venues and churches may operate under limited physical distancing protocols.
- Gyms may remain open if they follow standard sanitation protocols.
- Bars may remain open with increased standing-room occupancy.

The process of reopening the country by using a phased approach based upon testing and current data is designed to mitigate the resurgence of COVID-19 and protect the most vulnerable in the population. Governors have been given discretion to implement a reopening plan on either a statewide or countywide basis. Many governors have already proceeded to Phase One of the reopening plan and others are expected to soon follow.

If you have any questions about President Trump's Opening America Again plan or any other COVID-19 related issue, please let us know. We will be happy to provide answers and assist with your individual business needs as the country reopens.

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