

## **Governor Whitmer Signs Executive Order Closing Indoor Service at Bars Throughout Much of Lower Michigan to Protect Progress Against COVID-19**

*Governor also signs bills allowing cocktails-to-go at bars and restaurants*

**LANSING, Mich.** — Governor Whitmer today signed Executive Order 2020-143 closing indoor service at bars throughout most of lower Michigan to protect the progress Michigan has made against COVID-19. Regions 6 and 8, which include the Upper Peninsula and much of northern Michigan, are excluded from the order, and bars statewide can continue to serve outdoors. The governor also signed a package of bills allowing cocktails-to-go at bars and restaurants to help these businesses serve more Michiganders during this time.

“We owe it to our front line heroes who have sacrificed so much during this crisis to do everything we can to slow the spread of COVID-19 and reduce the chance of a resurgence like we are seeing in other states,” said **Governor Whitmer**. “Following recent outbreaks tied to bars, I am taking this action today to slow the spread of the virus and keep people safe. If we want to be in a strong position to reopen schools for in-person classroom instruction this fall, then we need to take aggressive action right now to ensure we don’t wipe out all the progress we have made.”

Over the past week, every region in Michigan has seen an uptick in new cases, and daily case counts now exceed 20 cases per million in the Grand Rapids, Lansing and Kalamazoo regions. Nearly 25% of diagnoses in June were of people ages 20 to 29, up from roughly 16% in May. That shift aligns with national trends, and the evidence suggests that young people may be driving a new phase of the pandemic.

As bars have reopened for indoor service across the country, some have been linked to a growing number of large outbreaks. In Michigan, for example, health officials in Ingham County have linked 107 confirmed COVID-19 cases to an outbreak in a single bar in East Lansing. Similar super-spreader events have been documented in bars in Florida, Louisiana, Texas and elsewhere.

Bars are often crowded, indoors and poorly ventilated — all of which make it easy to spread COVID-19 from person to person. Bars also encourage mingling among groups and facilitate close contact over an extended period of time. They are noisy, requiring raised voices and allowing for more projection of viral droplets. And they serve alcohol, which reduces inhibitions and decreases compliance with mask use and physical distancing rules.

“I urge all Michiganders to double down on mitigation tactics like wearing masks, practicing physical distancing, and washing hands, so we can get our trajectory headed in the right direction again,” said **Governor Whitmer**. “If we open up our economy too quickly, the efforts of the last three months will be for nothing and we will have to go through this pain all over again and put our economy, health and medical system at risk. Nobody wants to move backward. Everyone, please do your part, and let’s show the nation and the world how smart we are.”

The governor's order applies to establishments with on-premises retailer liquor licenses that earn more than 70% of their gross receipts from alcohol sales. That means that most brewpubs, distilleries, and vineyards can stay open indoors. Traditional bars, nightclubs, and strip clubs will have to end indoor service.

Governor Whitmer today also signed Senate Bill 942 and House Bills 5781 and 5811 into law, which allow bars and restaurants to sell cocktails-to-go and expand social districts to allow for more outdoor seating and areas for people to safely congregate while practicing physical distancing.

"Bars will not have to close down completely, but may still offer outdoor seating and use creative methods like cocktails-to-go in hopes that we can bring our numbers down," **Governor Whitmer** said. "I am hopeful providing options for cocktails-to-go and expanded social districts will ensure these businesses can remain open and Michiganders can safely and responsibly enjoy their summer outdoors."

Information around this outbreak is changing rapidly. The latest information is available at [Michigan.gov/Coronavirus](https://Michigan.gov/Coronavirus) and [CDC.gov/Coronavirus](https://CDC.gov/Coronavirus).

To view Executive Order 2020-143, which takes effect at 11pm tonight, click the link below:

- [EO 2020-143.pdf](#)

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