

October 29, 2020

For Immediate Release

Contact:

MLBA Executive Director Scott Ellis

517-719-4834

sellis@mlba.org

www.mlba.org



Whitmer, MDHHS Require Bar Staff to Log Patrons, Refuse Service

LANSING, MI – Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) today issued an updated Gatherings and Face Mask Order that establishes mandatory contact tracing for bars and restaurants.

“Another day, another bar and restaurant regulation that looks good on paper. Why do they continue to pick on bars and restaurants when their own data continues to show that we are not a problem industry?” said MLBA Executive Director Scott Ellis. “It would be more productive to focus on identifying and solving the real problems.”

Only two COVID-19 outbreaks (defined as two or more cases linked to one place) were tied to bars in the most recent data gathered by MDHHS, which accounted for a two-week period ending October 22. During that same period, zero ongoing clusters/outbreaks were being monitored.

“This puts an unnecessary burden on servers and staff who already have to deal with trouble customers who refuse to wear masks,” Ellis said. “The last time I checked, data collection was not in their job description.”

According to the order, all dine-in food service establishments must maintain accurate records of the names and phone numbers of patrons who purchase food for consumption on the premises, and the date and time of entry. If patrons refuse to provide information, servers must deny entry/service.

“Our great Michigan bars and restaurants have been doing everything they possibly can to ensure their businesses are clean and safe for patrons,” Ellis said. “While cases throughout the state are rising, bars and restaurants are keeping outbreaks at almost non-existent levels. If contact tracing is important, we should be doing it everywhere, not just in certain businesses to paint a bad picture.”

The epidemic order is effective immediately, except for the contact tracing portion for bars and restaurants, which goes into effect on November 2. The full order can be read here:

https://www.michigan.gov/coronavirus/0,9753,7-406-98178_98455-543708--,00.html

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The Michigan Licensed Beverage Association is a not-for-profit corporation created in 1939 by liquor licensees in the state of Michigan with the purpose of mutual improvement, protection, and benefit, therefore promoting the moral, social and intellectual advancement of the liquor licensees of the state of Michigan. For more information on the association and its activities, visit the MLBA website at www.mlba.org.
