



News Now

Mike DeWine, *Governor*
Lori Criss, *Director*

March 12, 2020

>>> State Psychiatric Hospitals Limit Visitation

The Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (OhioMHAS) values our patients' visitors, and the role they play in recovery and wellness of their loved one. Please be advised, that Governor Mike DeWine confirmed on March 9, 2020, Ohio's first positive coronavirus (COVID-19) cases in Ohio. The Governor signed [Executive Order 2020-01D](#), declaring a state of emergency to protect the well-being of Ohioans. Over the past couple of days the situation with Coronavirus (COVID-19) has continued to evolve and now includes cases of individuals who have not traveled to an impacted area being diagnosed with the virus. For more information on the evolving situation with COVID-19 please visit: coronavirus.ohio.gov, or call: **Call 1-833-4-ASK-ODH (1-833-427-5634)**.

In response to the Governor's most recent recommendations, OhioMHAS is limiting access to our facilities across Ohio the state's six regional psychiatric hospitals by prohibiting outside visitation. At this time, telephonic visitation can occur as we finalize technology to assist with further visitation options. Outside contractors and vendors that are mission critical will be granted access to the hospital after they have been screened.



The health and safety of our patients and staff is our top priority. We are committed to efforts to prevent the spread of the virus while ensuring continuity of care for those who OhioMHAS serves.

Please know that these safety measures have been put in place as a means of protection and are not meant to isolate or limit communication with patients. Rest assured OhioMHAS staff will work diligently to incorporate the use of technology to maintain and facilitate communication between patients and their families and guardians.

In addition, we have increased the cleaning schedules at the hospitals, and staff are encouraging all people who enter the hospital to wash their hands frequently with soap and water, and to use the hand sanitizer provided in the reception areas. These safety measures will be reassessed daily.

Practice Preventative Measures

- Wash your hands often with soap and water.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Call before visiting your doctor.
- Clean and disinfect "high touch" surfaces often.

Information on the Coronavirus in Ohio is evolving daily. State and local governments are working to ensure Ohioans have access to up to date information. If you have questions or would like additional information and resources, we urge you to use the Ohio Department of Health's call center to get answers to specific questions regarding COVID-19. **Call 1-833-4-ASK-ODH (1-833-427-5634)**, or visit coronavirus.ohio.gov.

For information and resources for maintaining behavioral health during this uncertain time and to stay up to date on OhioMHAS actions related to the virus, please visit: <https://mha.ohio.gov/Health-Professionals/About-Mental-Health-and-Addiction-Treatment/Emergency-Preparedness/Coronavirus#42351146-cdc-resources>, or visit the OhioMHAS home page at: mha.ohio.gov and click on *Managing Coronavirus-related stress* at the top of the page.

>>> Telehealth Update

The Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (OhioMHAS) has developed a guidance document for providing behavioral health services via telehealth. Please review and follow the guidance listed in [this document](#). OhioMHAS Director Lori Criss shared [this memo](#) regarding funding of behavioral health services delivered via telehealth with county ADAMH boards today. Stay up to date with coronavirus information specific to behavioral health providers at: <https://mha.ohio.gov/Health-Professionals/About-Mental-Health-and-Addiction-Treatment/Emergency-Preparedness/Coronavirus>.

>>> Ohio Bans Mass Gatherings of 100 or More

Ohio Governor Mike DeWine today announced that Ohio Department of Health Director Amy Acton, M.D., MPH has signed an order to prohibit mass gatherings in the state of Ohio. Mass gatherings are defined as any event or convening that brings together 100 or more persons in a single room or single space at the same time such as an auditorium, stadium, arena, large conference room, meeting hall, theater, or any other confined indoor or outdoor space. This would include parades, fairs, and festivals. Mass gatherings does not include normal operations of airports, bus and train stations, medical facilities, libraries, shopping malls and centers, or other spaces where 100 or more persons may be in transit. It also does not include typical office environments, schools, restaurants, factories, or retail/grocery stores where large numbers of people are present, but it is unusual for them to be within arm's length of one another. [Additional exclusions are listed in the full Ohio Department of Health order](#). This order will take effect immediately and will remain until the state of emergency declared by the Governor has been rescinded or modified.

Other announcements made today by Governor DeWine:

FIFTH CASE CONFIRMED:

Ohio now has five confirmed cases of COVID-19. The fifth case involves a 55-year-old Trumbull County man who is currently hospitalized. The man has no travel history outside of Ohio, and this case represents a case of community spread. Governor DeWine and Dr. Acton expect that the number of cases will continue to grow, as medical experts have predicted that the number of cases will continue to double every six days.

NURSING HOMES/ASSISTED LIVING:

At the urging of the nursing home industry, the Ohio Department of Health will soon update its current order limiting visitors to nursing and assisted living homes to reflect that no visitors will be admitted.

SCHOOL CLOSURES:

Beginning at the conclusion of the school day on Monday, March 16, all K-12 schools will close to students through Friday, April 3. This order includes all public, community, and private schools in the state, but does not apply to Ohio's childcare system such as daycare centers and home-based childcare providers. Over the next 72 hours, the Ohio Department of Education will develop guidance for K-12 schools to ensure the continuity of important student services, including a strategy for providing meals.

In the News

3.12.20 | *Columbus Dispatch* [Coronavirus response: State employees working from home, visits to prisons and mental hospitals banned](#)

3.11.20 | *Richland Source* [Galion resident, OSU Mansfield student, using own recovery process to help others](#)

3.11.20 | *Hillsboro Times-Gazette (column)* [Warning signs of mental illness](#)

3.11.20 | *Columbus Dispatch* [Ohio state, local governments will pursue joint damages settlement over opioids](#)

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