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Milwaukee Health Department Modifies COVID-19 Public Health Order *Gathering Limits Eased As Disease Trends Improve*

Milwaukee – The Milwaukee Health Department is changing the current public health order as the COVID-19 gating criteria continue to show improvement. The most significant changes in the new Order #4.4 affect gathering size restrictions. Under the revised order, indoor gatherings can include up to 250 people if masks are worn, attendees stay seated, and there is sufficient space for distancing. New provisions permit even larger numbers of attendees if an approved safety plan is in place.

The new order also revises the provisions related to recreational and athletic activities. COVID-19 testing will no longer be required for team and contact sports. Additionally, two observers or fans will be permitted for each participant in recreational activities, and, with an approved safety plan, organizations can host additional attendees.

Discussions between the Milwaukee Health Department and various sectors of society and the economy helped inform changes in the public health order. Order #4.4 will take effect on Friday, February 5, 2021. The health department anticipates the new order will remain in place for at least the next month.

“Changes in our public health orders are based on a careful review of disease trends and authoritative information from the scientific community. The modifications we are making this week allow for additional reopening while maintaining public safety,” Acting Health Commissioner Marlaina Jackson said. “We are cautiously optimistic that Milwaukee will see continued improvement in our gating criteria. Even so, the pandemic continues to take its toll here, and we cannot let our guard down.”

Under the new order and with approved safety plans, it will be possible for limited reopening of museums and public exhibition spaces. The Order #4.4 also allows bars and restaurants to establish counter service for ordering and pick up. The provisions covering weddings, funerals and religious entities are modified to match the gathering requirements for entertainment venues. While seating is required for all attendees, standing is allowed at traditional portions of a service.

The complete text of the COVID-19 Public Health Plan for the City of Milwaukee, Order #4.4 is available online at the Moving Milwaukee Forward Safely site at city.milwaukee.gov/MMFS.

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