

WAYNE COUNTY LOCAL PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT EMERGENCY
EPIDEMIC ORDER IN RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC UNDER MCL 333.2453

DECLARATION OF CONTINUED EMERGENCY DUE TO COVID-19
TO ALLOW PUBLIC MEETINGS OF GOVERNMENTAL BODIES TO BE HELD REMOTELY
UNDER PUBLIC ACT 228 OF 2020
EXTENDED FROM JUNE 1, 2021 to JUNE 30, 2021

On May 18, 2021, I, Carol Austerberry, the Health Officer of the Wayne County Local Public Health Department, am extending the Local Public Health Emergency Epidemic Order (originally issued March 20, 2021) for the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pursuant to section 333.2453 of the Public Health Code of the State of Michigan, as it has been determined that it is necessary to protect the public health from further transmission of COVID-19 within Wayne County. The jurisdiction of the Wayne County Local Public Health Department is Wayne County, except for the City of Detroit.

COVID-19 remains an imminent threat to the public throughout Wayne County. In the jurisdiction of the Wayne County Local Public Health Department, meetings of governmental bodies must be accessible to all members of the public, vaccinated and unvaccinated. With the increased number of variant cases in Wayne County communities, the transmission rates of COVID-19 in our communities are still very high. For example, the SARS-CoV-2 B.1.617 variant, which is more transmissible than the prevalent strain, was recently found in Wayne County residents. This variant was initially detected in India in December 2020 and is currently classified as a *variant of interest* by the CDC and a *variant of concern* by the World Health Organization.

With the emergence of the SARS-CoV-2 B.1.617.2 1.7 variant in out-Wayne County communities, mandating certain in-person open meetings at this time may pose a substantial risk to some members of the public and various governmental bodies within the Wayne County Local Public Health Department's jurisdiction. Allowing for the option of remote meetings maximizes transparency in government and serves to protect the public from further transmission of COVID-19.

In preparing this order, the Wayne County Local Public Health Department weighed the purpose and intent of the Open Meetings Act and its 2020 amendment to promote open, in-person meetings with the public health mandate to ensure safe access to meetings of public bodies. Notably, over the past year, remote meetings of public bodies throughout the state have been held in accordance with the public access requirements in the Governor's former Executive Orders and then, since October 2020, Public Act 228 of 2020, with accountability, and in some cases, greater public participation.

Therefore, I am issuing this Emergency Epidemic Order to allow public bodies to continue to hold meetings remotely as an option from June 1, 2021 to June 30, 2021. This order seeks to

respect the goal of allowing meetings to be held in-person, especially when a local body evaluates its risk level based upon the rate of COVID-19 transmission in its community or communities and determines that in-person meetings may safely be held.

Under this order, a local body may hold in-person meetings if, on the date of the scheduled in-person meeting, the public body is compliant with the then-current state guidance issued by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS). The most recent MDHHS order and supporting guidance about open public meetings was provided in its Epidemic Order effective May 15, 2021, which is found here:

https://www.michigan.gov/coronavirus/0,9753,7-406-98178_98455-533660--,00.html

This is a direct link to the Epidemic Orders and Guidance Documents issued and updated by MDHHS. Current state orders and guidance should be consulted prior to any in-person meetings.

Such measures will be enforced, and any violations are subject to citation and penalties as outlined in the Michigan Public Health Code.

This order is hereby effective as of May 18, 2021 and will remain in effect until June 30, 2021 at 11:59 p.m., unless withdrawn or replaced.

This order may be revised as well as supplemented with specific procedures and orders per the Michigan Public Health Code.



Carol Austerberry, RS, MS, MPA
Wayne County Dept. of Health, Human & Veterans Services
Division Director/Local Health Officer

Dated: May 18, 2021