

MEDIA RELEASE

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### **Orange County Moves into Phase 3 of State's Reopening Plan**

HILLSBOROUGH, N.C. October 2, 2020 — Orange County will align with Gov. Roy Cooper's [executive order](#) taking North Carolina into Phase 3 of the state's reopening plan, effective at 5 p.m. Oct. 2. The order allows bars, movie theaters and outdoor venues, among others, to open with capacity limits, allows K-5 schools to reopen under the state's Plan A option and limits mass gatherings to 25 people indoors and 50 outdoors.

The governor and Secretary Mandy Cohen of the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services pointed to the stabilization of several key metrics — including hospitalizations, trajectory of confirmed cases, and positivity rates on COVID tests — as supporting this move.

“Current trends in Orange County allow us to move forward with the state, but should we experience changes in positivity rates, more clusters or outbreaks or an increase in the number of cases, we will not hesitate to reinstate stricter limits on gatherings and other activities,” said Penny Rich, chair of the Orange County Board of Commissioners. “We must remain diligent and continue social distancing and wearing masks while in public until a safe, effective vaccine is readily available.”

By aligning with the state plan, the county's stricter limit on mass gatherings is lifted. State limits of 25 people indoors and 50 outdoors will be in effect until further notice.

The state's Plan A for schools continues to include important safety measures like face coverings for all students, teachers and staff, social distancing, and symptom screening, but it does not require schools to reduce the number of children in the classroom. The school systems across Orange County will determine when to reopen their kindergarten-fifth grade classrooms and under which plan.

People of any age with [certain underlying medical conditions](#) are at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19. Those who are at risk are safer at home, and those who have contact with others at risk need to use caution when out.

Orange County extended its [emergency declaration](#) to Dec. 31, 2020.

#### **Reliable Information**

For the latest information and guidance relating to Orange County's COVID-19 response:

- Visit [www.orangecountync.gov/coronavirus](http://www.orangecountync.gov/coronavirus).
- Receive daily text updates on the crisis by texting 888-777 with OCNCEALTH for English speakers and OCNCSALUD for Spanish speakers.

- Sign up for a weekly e-newsletter about the COVID-19 response via the [county website](#).
- Follow the Orange County Health Department on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).
- The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services updates its [COVID-19 case count dashboard](#) daily at noon.
- To ask questions about the virus or social service needs, contact Orange County at 919-245-6111 or [covid19@orangecountync.gov](mailto:covid19@orangecountync.gov). The phone line and emails are monitored during business hours Monday-Friday.
- What's New in Phase 3?  
[https://www.orangecountync.gov/DocumentCenter/View/13074/phase\\_3\\_english\\_OCT\\_2\\_FINAL](https://www.orangecountync.gov/DocumentCenter/View/13074/phase_3_english_OCT_2_FINAL)
- Amendment to the Declaration of State of Emergency in Orange County:  
<https://www.orangecountync.gov/DocumentCenter/View/13075/Orange-County-Declaration-10-2-20-Amendment>
- Executive Order 169: <https://files.nc.gov/governor/documents/files/EO169-Phase-3.pdf>

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