

Wear Masks, Wash Hands, Social Distance: Governor, Others, Stress Safety Warning To Region After High COVID-19 Numbers

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EAST ST. LOUIS - Gov. J.B. Pritzker, Illinois Health Department Head Dr. Ngozi Ezike, the East Side Health District director and several other legislators and dignitaries attended an event to issue a strong warning to those in the Metro East that COVID-19 safety precautions have to be taken seriously.

Pritzker warned that Region 4, which is the Metro East for the state's Restore Illinois plan for the COVID-19 Pandemic, and Illinois are both at a "make-it-or-break-it moment."

Pritzker said heavier COVID-19 Pandemic mitigation restrictions have been applied to Region 4 and those may stiffen if residents do not take the warning seriously.

Within the first step of mitigations, Gov. Pritzker said if things don't improve it could mean the closure of indoor bars and indoor dining at restaurants. He said this region has to have an average of below 8 percent in two weeks from early this week or extended mitigation measures may be put in place.

IDPH announced late last week, that Region 4 will now have gathering limits reduced to 25 individuals or less or 25 percent overall room capacity. All bars, restaurants, and casinos are now required to close at 11 p.m. Bar stools have been removed or are not allowed to be used for the time being, Pritzker said. Limitations of tables six feet apart are also mandated to restaurants.

The positivity rate in Madison County on Thursday was 7.63 percent, a breath of fresh air, and much lower than previous days. The three-day average was 10.36 percent and the seven-day average was 10.37 percent.

There were a total of 3,304 overall cases of COVID-19 reported in Madison County and 1,836 active cases as of Thursday. Eighty-seven lives in Madison County have been reported lost to COVID-19.



East Side Health District Director Elizabeth Patton-Whiteside described her area as a “breeding ground for COVID.”

“We have to wake up and step up and realize the health department cannot fight COVID-19 alone,” she said. “Do your part and save yourself and your neighbor. Wear your masks, wash your hands, and social distance. Do not gather in large, unprotected areas.”

Gov. Pritzker concurred with Patton-Whiteside and said: “If you are not taking this seriously yet, now is the time to start wearing a mask and maintaining a social distance to keep small businesses open. Each of us has a role to play in the health and economy of our state and region.”

“Don’t indulge and think you know more than the health experts,” he said. “We are strong when we follow science and stand together.”