



Gov. Pritzker Changes His Mind: Region 4 Indoor Bar/Dining Service Is Temporarily Shut Down Because Of COVID Numbers

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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METRO EAST – Governor Pritzker and the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) today announced they have changed their minds in regard to the COVID-19 Region 4 mitigation efforts and several mitigation changes are now taking effect in the Metro East on Wednesday, September 2, 2020.

These are the most eye-opening mitigation changes for Region 4 as of Wednesday ordered by Gov. Pritzker and IDPH:

Bars

No indoor service

All outside bar service closes at 11:00 p.m. and may reopen no earlier than 6:00am the following day

All bar patrons should be seated at tables outside

No ordering, seating, or congregating at bar (bar stools should be removed)

Tables should be 6 feet apart

No standing or congregating indoors or outdoors while waiting for a table or exiting

No dancing or standing indoors

Reservations required for each party

No seating of multiple parties at one table

Restaurants

No indoor dining or bar service

All outdoor dining closes at 11:00 p.m. and may reopen no earlier than 6:00 a.m. the following day

Outside dining tables should be 6 feet apart

No standing or congregating indoors or outdoors while waiting for a table or exiting

Reservations required for each party

No seating of multiple parties at one table

Pritzker said the changes are being done because Region 4 has only increased its positivity rate following initial mitigations and is now reporting a current 7-day rolling test positivity average of 9.6 percent.

Pritzker said he made a mistake in adopting less restrictive regulations in Region 4, while speaking in Joliet on Monday.

"Let me just say it was a mistake, in my view, to make that adjustment that we made in Region 4," Pritzker said on Monday. "We were trying to understand the concept that the region they live in is slightly different. It's next to another Metro area that had different measures, and wanted to be responsive to the local communities and health departments."

The state has continued working closely with local public health administrators and county officials to address activities and behaviors contributing to the spread of COVID-19 in Region 4, added Pritzker.

Region 4 includes Bond, Clinton, Madison, Monroe, Randolph, St. Clair and Washington counties. Neighboring Jersey, Greene, Macoupin and Calhoun County are not part of Region 4.

Other mitigation measures taking effect September 2, 2020 as well as continuing mitigations already in place, include the following:

Meetings, Social Events, Gatherings (including weddings, funerals, potlucks, etc.)

Limit to lesser of 25 guests or 25 percent of overall room capacity

No party buses

Gaming and Casinos close at 11:00 p.m., are limited to 25% capacity, and follow mitigations for bars and restaurants, if applicable

Indoor visitation in long-term care settings and off-site outings were, and will continue to be, prohibited under the additional mitigation measures.

IDPH will continue to track the positivity rate in Region 4 to determine if mitigations can be relaxed, if additional mitigations are required, or if current mitigations should remain in place. If the positivity rate averages less than or equal to 6.5 percent over a 14-day period, the region will return to Phase 4 mitigations under the Restore Illinois Plan. If the positivity rate remains the same or increases over the next 14 days, more stringent mitigations can be applied to further reduce spread of the virus.

A full list of mitigation measures pertaining to some businesses and industries may be found on the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) website at www.dceocovid19resources.com/restore-illinois.

IDPH has been working closely with local health departments in the Metro East to provide education to the public and offer information to businesses and organizations on safer ways to reopen. The State has also provided guidance to retail stores, restaurants, offices, and businesses, as well as guidelines for outdoor events, sports, and recreation. The significance of face coverings, social distancing, and hand washing have been continuously emphasized by the administration throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

In early May, the State of Illinois opened a community-based testing site at the Jackie Joyner-Kersey Center in East St. Louis to make testing more readily available for anyone. An average of approximately 44,000 tests are resulted every day in Illinois from IDPH, hospital and commercial labs. Currently, there are 11 state-operated community-based testing sites across Illinois, as well six mobile teams that set up temporary testing sites in communities seeing outbreaks or an increase in cases, and six mobile teams that travel to congregate facilities, such as long-term care facilities, to provide testing. Anyone can be tested at these State sites regardless of symptoms and at no cost to the individual. In addition, there are almost 300 locations providing testing and be found on the IDPH website.

IDPH is also awarding approximately \$300 million in grants to local health departments and community-based organizations to conduct contact tracing, education, and support services. Every local health department is now utilizing an electronic contact tracing reporting system to collect consistent information to accurately capture the contact tracing efforts in Illinois and reduce further spread of the virus.

[Chris Rhodes also contributed to this story.](#)