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# Mills Administration Announces Update to Restarting Maine's Economy Plan

May 27, 2020

*Administration restricts reopening of restaurants in Androscoggin, Cumberland and York Counties to outside service only*

Governor Janet Mills today announced an update to her Administration's plan to restart Maine's economy as the state approaches the scheduled June 1 start date for Stage 2 of the plan.

The Mills Administration announced today that it is postponing the full reopening of restaurants for dine-in services in York, Cumberland, and Androscoggin counties. Restaurants in these counties were tentatively scheduled to reopen to dine-in services on June 1 (Stage 2) but are now restricted to reopening to outside dining service only beginning on that date in addition to continuing to provide take-away and delivery services. The decision to limit their reopening comes amidst an increase in hospitalizations as well as an increase in case counts in these three counties, both of which are metrics [monitored](#) by the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention (Maine CDC). A date for the reopening of dine-in services in these counties is yet to be determined.

*"Given the trends we are seeing in certain parts of Maine, our Administration is revising the plan to align with what is in the best interest of public health. To that end, rather than permitting dine-in services in Androscoggin, Cumberland, and York Counties as we had originally planned, we will be allowing outside dining only with precautions, a move we believe is safer for the health of Maine people and that balances the economic needs of these businesses," said Governor Mills.*

In the wake of this change, the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Administrative and Financial Services, which have licensing authority, are streamlining and expediting approval of licenses to facilitate outside-only dining.

Aside from this update, Stage 2 will move forward as planned. This means that on June 1 restaurants in Penobscot County will be allowed to voluntarily reopen for both indoor and outdoor dining services [with strict health and safety precautions](#), joining the twelve other rural counties where such establishments have been permitted to reopen as part of the [Governor's rural reopening plan](#). Although Penobscot County has been identified as an area with community transmission, the decision to allow it to reopen as scheduled results in part because the county has not had more than three new cases a day since April.

Additionally, on June 1, retail businesses in York, Cumberland, Androscoggin, and Penobscot counties – counties where these businesses have been closed to indoor shopping – will also be permitted to voluntarily reopen, also with [strict, sector-specific health and safety precautions](#). These businesses now join those in the other twelve counties permitted to reopen as part of the Governor's rural reopening plan.

The Administration continues to closely review the status of gyms, fitness centers, and nail salons, the reopening of which were paused last week as a result of concerns about the transmission of the virus in these settings. [View a complete outline of Stage 2 with COVID-19 Prevention Checklist guidance](#).

*"We recognize this is an incredibly difficult time for the business community, and we will do all we can to work collaboratively to develop solutions that keep people safe and create opportunities for businesses," said Heather Johnson, Commissioner of the Department of Economic and Community Development. "We believe that is what we have done here, and we will continue to examine similar opportunities moving forward."*

Throughout the reopening process, Maine CDC has monitored epidemiological data, including case trends, hospitalization rates, and reports of COVID-like symptoms, as well as health care readiness and capacity. The Administration also continues to evaluate standards outlined in the [Governor's reopening vision statement](#), such as testing capacity and the State's ability to conduct contact tracing. It is a review of these metrics in their

totality and in context, as opposed to the daily change of a single metric, that informs decisions. Decisions also take into account the insight of Maine CDC epidemiologists; for example, whether an increase in cases is related to an outbreak in a congregate living facility or to spread among close contacts of a previous positive case.

In the past two weeks, Maine's count of confirmed COVID-19 cases has increased and there has been an uptick in hospitalizations. However, Maine's hospital capacity and readiness – including the availability of ICU beds, non-ICU beds and ventilators – remains adequate.

*"Data and science continue to guide Maine's public health response to COVID-19," said Dr. Nirav D. Shah, Director of the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention. "Expanded testing capacity and enhanced contact tracing add to our analytical toolkit as we review daily fluctuations in metrics and longer-term trends."*

Adjusted for population size, as of today, Maine ranked tenth lowest in the nation in terms of positive cases; 39th in the nation in terms of deaths; 30th in terms of patients ever-hospitalized out of the 35 states reporting; and 17th in the percentage of people who have recovered out of the 41 states reporting.

Recently, the Mills Administration has more than [tripled the State's testing capacity](#) through a partnership with IDEXX, [eliminated its testing prioritization system](#) to allow anyone suspected of having COVID-19 to be tested, [recommended universal testing in congregate living situations](#) after a single confirmed case, [expanded the State's contact tracing system](#), and announced [the deployment of Federal funds](#) to expand the State's lab capacity, bolster rural hospital lab capacity, and establish drive-through testing sites.

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