

Senate Republican Open Michigan Safely Proposal

Note: This document is a proposal that may be refined and improved over time with input from the medical community, healthcare systems and others with relevant expertise.

Proposal Overview

The Senate Republican caucus believes it is our responsibility to propose a framework for Michiganders to live life in the presence of COVID-19 while also minimizing risk. We now have data and experience to allow us to transition from the definition of “essential” to a new standard of allowed activity defined as “safe.” Specifically, safe workplaces. The premise and challenge: defining and executing safe workplace policies and protocols so individuals can approach being as safe in their workplaces as they can be in their homes.

The cornerstone of our proposal is strict adherence to handwashing, social distancing, and use of masks. Our proposed framework considers phases of transition, geographic differentiation, and plans for resurgence, as described below.

Phases of Transition

Transitions are separated into five phases. Each phase considers testing capabilities, healthcare systems capacity for COVID-19 patients and treatment, availability of personal protective equipment, available data, and ultimately a vaccine or similar medical breakthrough to combat COVID-19. Each phase outlines conditions in the state, suggested safe business operations, and guarded levels of citizen activity.

Geographic Differentiation

COVID-19 does not recognize geographical boundaries, but its impact on the state varies significantly by region. Different regions of Michigan should be permitted to operate at different phase levels based on the available data within the region. Areas such as southeast Michigan that are experiencing high case volume and high death rates should be restricted to early phases, while the Upper Peninsula may be able to safely operate under a later phase designation that appropriately reflects risk in that region.

Resurgence Plans

Michigan must be prepared to adjust to surges in COVID-19 cases. Until a significant medical breakthrough is achieved that markedly reduces risk for the entire population, such as a vaccine, our citizens will likely live with recurring outbreaks of the virus for months or longer. The state must develop resurgence plans that require tightening of restrictions on behavior and activity within regions of our state to combat COVID-19. Resurgence plans would utilize known strategies such as extreme social distancing, temporary closures, wearing masks, and/or other measures. The goal is for the phases represented to become a continuum so that, based on infection rates and healthcare capacity data, we may advance up or down in phases to mitigate risk and spread of the virus.