



Dear State of Missouri Team:

We have entered a new phase in Missouri’s fight to slow COVID-19. Parts of the state are experiencing community transmission. This means you should assume that every community is exposed to the virus.

As we continue to work every day to serve our fellow Missourians during these challenging times, we want to remind you about what you can do to protect yourselves and others.

In the past week, Governor Parson has taken extraordinary action to help Missouri slow the spread of COVID-19. Last Saturday, [he directed the state to enforce social distancing limits](#) in line with guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Then, on Monday, he directed that we close public access to our offices and facilities across the state starting on March 24 through 12:01 A.M. on Monday, April 6 to help accelerate social distancing among the public. He also directed all departments to continue implementing their Continuity of Operations Plans to further reduce the number of State of Missouri staff working close together in offices and facilities.

Social distancing is an important weapon in the fight to slow COVID-19. It is probably easier to think about this as “physical distancing.” You want to reduce the opportunities of being close to other people. Keep a safe distance – 6 feet – when with others. When we look around the world to see what is working to defeat this virus, this is what we find.

This means changing your normal routines. Reduce your trips to the grocery store or pharmacy, if possible. Avoid even small groups of people whenever possible. Use the phone to chat with someone, rather than walking to their office.

Thank you for all you are doing to model the behavior we are asking of all Missouri citizens. In addition to social distancing, remember that washing your hands well and often is key to prevention. Remember the basics:

- **Stay clean...**
 - Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds especially after you have been in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
 - If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry.
 - Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
 - Wipe down surfaces like door knobs, handles, and table tops with an approved cleaner to kill the virus.
- **Avoid contact...**
 - Put distance between yourself and other people if COVID-19 is spreading in your community. This is especially important for people who are at higher risk of getting very sick – those who are older and who have preexisting health conditions. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/high-risk-complications.html>
 - If you have a fever or feel ill, stay home and isolate yourself from your family or roommates. You don't want to risk infecting them. Then call your medical provider and follow their advice.

For more on COVID-19, and tips to protect yourself and managing through this challenge, see: <https://health.mo.gov/living/healthcondiseases/communicable/novel-coronavirus/>

If you have any questions about State of Missouri policies, visit: <https://oa.mo.gov/personnel/state-team-member-resources>

Thank you for how hard you work every day to help our fellow citizens. We are one Missouri.

Sincerely,

Randall Williams, MD, FACOG

Director, Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services