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Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.
Shelby County Health Department

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HEALTH DIRECTIVE No. 21 LIFTS MORE RESTRICTIONS ON BUSINESSES

SHELBY COUNTY, TN – The Shelby County Health Department issues Health Directive No. 21 today to go into effect at midnight on May 15th. Health Directive No. 21 is designed to be a long-range directive that balances recommended safety measures for individuals and businesses with greatly reduced mandatory restrictions.

The last Health Directive stated, “If the County does not enter into a third surge over the next 30 days, the next health directive will provide highly recommended guidance on continuing safe practices for people and businesses that will slow and end the transmission of COVID-19, which continues to be a direct and deadly threat to people in Shelby County. The more steps you and your family take to prevent the spread of COVID-19, the safer you and others will be. Again, please note that if case numbers and other indicators remain stable over the next 30 days, the next health directive, which will be issued in May 2021, will shift from a mandatory approach to a recommendation approach.”

The changes reflected in Health Directive 21 can be made at this time because case rates of the virus have remained stable over the last 30 days. In mid-April, when Health Directive 20 was issued, there was an average rate of approximately 165 new cases per day. Now that average is approximately 135 cases per day.

Key changes in Health Directive No. 21:

- Replaces Face Mask Directive No. 5 upon Health Directive 21’s effective date (May 15, 2021), resulting in one consolidated document for COVID-related information;
- Provides guidance on when masks must not be worn, when they must be worn, and when they are highly recommended;
- Requires masks for certain employees who work in environments where there is an increased risk of exposure;

- Allows businesses, school authorities, and public authorities to require masks if proper notice signs are posted at frequently used entrances;
- Greatly reduces the number of mandatory restrictions in favor of highly recommended guidance;
- Allows event planners for large-scale festivals, fairs, parades, sporting events, and community events to seek the Department’s technical assistance for their event plan(s), but the Department will not issue “approvals” for any event at this time; and
- Allows schools to seek the Department’s technical assistance for their physical locations, but the Department will not issue “approvals” of any school-related operational plan(s).

“Now that the COVID-19 vaccines are available to the majority of Shelby County’s population, the Health Department’s role is continued monitoring of COVID-19 cases, contact tracing, and providing recommendations, including that all eligible persons be vaccinated as soon as possible,” said Shelby County Health Officer Dr. Bruce Randolph. “Although we are moving from requirements to recommendations, a few mandatory requirements will remain in effect, such as cooperating with the Health Department on case investigations and contact tracing.”

“We are pleased to be able to make these modifications to the Health Directive. We will continue to monitor viral activity and align our health recommendations with guidance from local public health and medical experts,” said Interim Health Director La Sonya Hall. “And we are glad to be able to safely lift some restrictions and return to more normal activities.”

The text of Health Directive No. 21 is available here:

www.shelbytnhealth.com/healthdirectives.

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