

## **State announces expanded mask order, out-of-state travel advisory**

Gov. Larry Hogan (R) this week announced the expansion of the statewide masking order and a public health advisory for all out-of-state travel, based on a recent increase in hospitalizations and other data.

“We find ourselves at a fork in the road — a critical turning point where we could either continue making progress and continue heading in the right direction, or we could ignore the warnings and spike back up like much of the rest of the country,” Hogan said in a July 29 release.

“We are doing much better on our health metrics than most of the rest of the country, and we are doing much better on our economic recovery than most of the rest of the country, and we want to do what it takes to keep it that way.”

Hogan is expanding the statewide masking order that has been in effect since April 18. Under the new order, which takes effect Friday, July 31, at 5 p.m., all Marylanders over the age of 5 are required to wear face coverings in the public spaces of all businesses across the state.

Face coverings will also be required in outdoor public areas, whenever it is not possible to maintain physical distancing. The expanded order continues to provide certain exceptions, including for medical conditions.

In addition, the Maryland Department of Health issued a public health advisory for out-of-state travel. Under this advisory, Marylanders are strongly advised against traveling to states with positivity rates of 10% or higher. Anyone traveling from these states should get tested and self-quarantine while awaiting results. Marylanders are advised to postpone or cancel travel to these areas - currently Florida, Texas, Georgia, Louisiana, Arizona, Alabama, South Carolina, Nebraska and Idaho - until their positivity rates decline.

The governor also unveiled contact tracing data showing that family gatherings are the most common high-risk gathering and working outside the home is the most common high-risk location for COVID-19.