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**MAYOR LIGHTFOOT ANNOUNCES ROADMAP FOR FURTHER EASING OF COVID-19 REGULATIONS**

*Limited expansion of indoor dining capacity coming into effect tomorrow; path to 50% capacity established as COVID-19 metrics continue to improve*

**CHICAGO** – Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot, the Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) and the Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection (BACP) today announced a roadmap for Chicago to continue to cautiously ease regulations on businesses as COVID-19 metrics improve. This strategy, which is also being adopted by the Cook County Department of Public Health, identifies a series of metrics that will determine when and how Chicago can carefully reopen businesses and expand indoor capacity so as not to reverse the progress made in the City's fight against COVID-19 in recent weeks and months.

Under the plan, indoor service at bars, restaurants and events can expand to the lesser of 25% capacity or 50 people per room or floor effective tomorrow, February 11. The easing of additional restrictions, including the expansion of indoor capacity to 40%, will be possible once the city reaches at least the "Moderate-Risk" level in the following metrics: COVID cases diagnosed per day, COVID test positivity, Emergency Department visits for COVID-like illness and total number of ICU beds occupied by COVID patients. Capacity can then increase to 50% after two weeks (one incubation period) of successfully maintaining at least the "Moderate-Risk" level across all four metrics.

"We are definitely trending in the right direction today, and I thank the residents and businesses that continue to do what is necessary to save lives," said Mayor Lightfoot. "The tragedy of this pandemic unfortunately continues but there's hope at the end of this long journey. This path to 50% capacity ensures that we move forward with hope and confidence but also with the necessary precautions in place to ensure that the rush to reopen doesn't endanger our progress."

In recent weeks and months, Chicago has made significant progress in the ongoing fight against the deadly COVID-19 pandemic. The positivity rate today is 4.7%, the lowest it has been since early October. Total cases, hospitalizations and deaths have



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also dropped considerably from the peak of the second surge. While these improved metrics are a great sign of hope and progress, Chicago remains in the midst of the pandemic, and the roadmap released today makes sure that we continue to move forward carefully and cautiously.

“While we’re excited to be making this move today and further re-opening Chicago, it needs to be done the right way or we risk seeing an uptick in cases and having to tighten restrictions yet again,” said CDPH Commissioner Allison Arwady, M.D. “I’m proud of how far we’ve come as a city and I know we can do this smartly and safely.”

Under the framework released today, now that Chicago has made enough progress to move out of state-imposed Tier 1 Mitigation Measures, CDPH has identified four metrics that are being used locally to determine the process for continuing to ease COVID-19 regulations. Those metrics are:

- **COVID cases diagnosed per day:** currently averaging 466, in the “High-Risk” level. This number must be below 400 new cases per day to reach the “Moderate-Risk” level.
- **COVID test positivity:** currently averaging 4.7%, in the “Low-Risk” level
- **Emergency Departments visits for COVID-like illness:** currently averaging 69 per day, in the “Moderate-Risk” level
- **ICU beds occupied by COVID patients:** currently averaging 148, in the “Moderate-Risk” level

Based on the progress the City has already made in these metrics, effective tomorrow, indoor service can increase to the lesser of 25% or 50 people per room or floor at bars, restaurants or events. In order to move to the next milestone and expand indoor dining capacity to 40%, Chicago will need to reach “Moderate-Risk” or better in all four categories for at least three straight days. Assuming that the other metrics continue to improve or hold steady, this will be possible once Chicago reaches fewer than 400 COVID-19 cases per day, based on the seven-day rolling average, for at least three straight days. Currently, Chicago is averaging 466 new cases per day, down from 607 one week ago.

Once Chicago reaches the “Moderate-Risk” level for all four metrics for three days, indoor dining at bars and restaurants can expand to 40% of the establishment’s capacity. Additional updates to other business regulations will also be considered when Chicago reaches this milestone. Expansion to 50% capacity will then be possible if and when Chicago reaches “Moderate-Risk” in all four metrics and maintains those levels for a period of two weeks. More information on Chicago’s plan for cautious reopening will be available at [chicago.gov/reopening](https://chicago.gov/reopening).



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“As one of the most highly regulated industries in terms of health and safety, restaurants are ready and equipped to safely serve more diners indoors,” said Sam Toia, President & CEO, Illinois Restaurant Association. “We have been advocating tirelessly on this point, and appreciate Mayor Lightfoot and President Preckwinkle’s continued dialogue and action on this issue. It is estimated that 20% of restaurants will permanently close as a result of the pandemic. Today’s announcement comes at a critical time, and is another step towards recovery. Restaurants need this increase, as well as federal relief, more than ever.”

While indoor dining capacity is expanding tomorrow to the lesser of 25% or 50 people, other regulations for bars, restaurants and events will remain in place. This includes the following:

- Food must be available at all times in order to offer indoor service. This means that bars, taverns or breweries without a food license can reopen indoors as long as they partner with a food establishment so that food is available to patrons at all times (e.g., making menus available and allowing delivery, allowing patrons to order from third-party delivery services).
- Maximum of six patrons at indoor or outdoor tables
- Patrons can sit at bars, with six feet of social distancing between parties
- Face coverings must be worn at all times, except when patrons are seated and actively eating or drinking
- Patrons must be seated whenever they are eating or drinking
- Tables must be six feet apart
- Establishments must close for on-site service at 12:00am
- The sale of alcohol must end at 11:00pm, including alcohol sold for on-site consumption, delivery or carry out

To help businesses navigate the updated plan for safe operations, BACP will continue its comprehensive outreach efforts to ensure that businesses understand the regulations through webinars, outreach calls and consultations. Since March, BACP has held 35 webinars, made over 33,000 calls directly to businesses and conducted 770 non-disciplinary consultations through the Active Compliance Program. BACP will also continue conducting investigations in response to complaints and taking enforcement action in egregious and repeated cases. Since March, BACP has conducted 8,450 investigations and cited 435 businesses for violating COVID-19 violations.

“Throughout this pandemic, Chicago’s businesses have stepped up repeatedly to keep their customers and employees safe,” said Rosa Escareno, BACP Commissioner. “I am thrilled that we have made enough progress to continue cautiously reopening,



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but, as always, I urge all Chicagoans to double down on what works to keep our community safe.”

In order to ensure that Cook County moves forward safely and cautiously, the Cook County Department of Public Health (CCDPH) and Stickney Township are announcing that their suburban Cook County jurisdictions are aligning with Chicago’s reopening framework. Therefore, effective tomorrow in suburban Cook County, bars, restaurants and events can increase indoor service capacity to the lesser of 25% or 50 people. Additional easing of restrictions in suburban Cook County will be possible based on the County’s continued progress in the four metrics identified above. More information on the regulations in suburban Cook County can be found at [cookcountypublichealth.org](https://www.cookcountypublichealth.org).

“We are cautiously optimistic about relaxing some restrictions – but it is imperative that we are careful in light of the new, very transmissible variants we are seeing,” said Dr. Rachel Rubin, Senior Medical Officer and Co-Lead, Cook County Department of Public Health. “We must also continue to wear masks, watch our distance, and wash our hands to continue the gains we are making.”

While Chicago has made significant progress in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, the City reminds all Chicagoans that we remain in the midst of a pandemic and calls on everyone to continue following the safety precautions that helped us flatten the curve a second times. While indoor capacity will be slowly expanding, regulations requiring face coverings and social distancing will remain in place at all businesses. Furthermore, indoor residential gatherings must be limited to no more than ten individuals, and residents are called to continue to wear face coverings, maintain social distancing and avoid large gatherings. Taken along with the City’s plan to slowly and cautiously reopen, these efforts will ensure that we continue to make progress and move forward.

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