

Gov. Cooper Issues Executive Order to Relax State's Outdoor Mask Mandate and Ease Mass Gathering Limits *State continues to strive to get two thirds of adults at least partially vaccinated*

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Today, Governor Roy Cooper and North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Mandy K. Cohen, M.D. gave an update on the state's current data, trends and vaccination progress. As the state's metrics and key indicators remain stable, Governor Cooper also signed an Executive Order outlining safety measures for the month of May. Executive Order No. 209 will take effect April 30 and is set to expire June 1. As more North Carolinians get vaccinated and adhere to safety protocols over the course of the next month, the state anticipates lifting more restrictions on June 1.

"While our numbers are mostly stable, we have more work to do to beat back this pandemic," said Governor Cooper. "Let's work hard in May and get as many people vaccinated as we can before summer gets here."

Under the new Executive Order, masks will still be required indoors but are no longer mandated outdoors. Masks are still strongly recommended outdoors by NC DHHS in crowded areas and higher risk settings where social distancing is difficult.

Executive Order No. 209 will also increase mass gathering capacity limits. The number of people who may gather indoors will increase from 50 to 100 and the number of people who may gather outdoors will increase from 100 to 200. Occupancy limits currently in place will remain the same.

"Fortunately, we now have enough vaccine for everyone. They are free and widely available across the state. In many places you don't need appointment," said Secretary Cohen. "For those who have questions, I encourage you to go to YourSpotYourShot.nc.gov to learn about the benefits of the vaccines, potential temporary reactions you might experience, and answers to common questions."

North Carolina continues to focus on distributing vaccines quickly and equitably. To date, the state has administered over 7 million doses. 48.7% percent of those 18 and up are at least partially vaccinated, and 39.2% percent of those 18 and up have been fully vaccinated.

State health officials are continuing to monitor COVID-19 and its more contagious variants in North Carolina, which is why it is important to continue to follow the state's mask mandate and

continue to practice safety precautions, including the Three Ws—wear a mask, wait 6 feet apart, and wash hands often.

Dr. Cohen also provided an update on North Carolina's data and trends.

Trajectory in COVID-Like Illness (CLI) Surveillance Over 14 Days

- North Carolina's syndromic surveillance trend for COVID-like illness is level.

Trajectory of Confirmed Cases Over 14 Days

- North Carolina's trajectory of cases is level.

Trajectory in Percent of Tests Returning Positive Over 14 Days

- North Carolina's trajectory in percent of tests returning positive is level.

Trajectory in Hospitalizations Over 14 Days

- North Carolina's trajectory of hospitalizations is level.

In addition to monitoring these metrics, the state continues to respond to virus spread in testing, tracing and prevention.

Read [Executive Order No. 209](#).

Read [Frequently Asked Questions](#).

View the [slides](#) from today's briefing.

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