



STATE OF MICHIGAN

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

LANSING

GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

ROBERT GORDON
DIRECTOR

DIRECTOR'S ORDER

Emergency Order under MCL 333.2253 Safe Housing for Michigan Homeless

The novel coronavirus (COVID-19) is a respiratory disease that can result in serious illness or death. It is caused by a new strain of coronavirus not previously identified in humans and easily spread from person to person. There is currently no approved vaccine or antiviral treatment for this disease.

On March 10, 2020, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services identified the first two presumptive-positive cases of COVID-19 in Michigan. On that same day, Governor Gretchen Whitmer issued Executive Order 2020-4. As of April 26, 2020, there were 37,778 cases of COVID-19 diagnosed in Michigan, with 3,315 persons having perished from the virus. The exponential increase in cases demonstrates that many of these cases are the result of widening community spread. Social distancing measures, including isolation of persons affected by COVID-19, are essential to control the epidemic. The success of such measures is reliant upon rapid identification of persons affected by the virus, including those who perish as the result of COVID-19 infection.

There are over 65,000 housing insecure or homeless individuals living in the state of Michigan annually ("Michigan Homeless"). The Michigan Homeless lack the ability to shelter safely at home, as required by Governor Whitmer's Executive Order 2020-21 and subsequent "Stay Home, Stay Safe" directives. The statewide closure of places of public accommodation has also left the Michigan Homeless with fewer places to practice safe hygiene and provide for daily necessities.

As such, Michigan Homeless are at greater risk of becoming ill with COVID-19. Homeless shelters as they existed before the current health crisis are congregate settings that present a greater risk of transmission between individuals in the shelter. Preexisting shelters do not have the ability to separate residents with suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19. In addition, many preexisting shelters do not have sufficient clinical resources to monitor for symptoms. Requiring that state and local governments establish means and procedures to quarantine and isolate Michigan Homeless with suspected and confirmed cases of COVID-19, is necessary to avoid, correct, and remove some of the danger posed by the risk of contagion discussed above.

In light of the above, and upon the advice of scientific and medical experts employed by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, I have concluded per MCL 333.2253 that COVID-19 has reached epidemic status in Michigan.

I further conclude that control of the epidemic is necessary to protect the public health, and that it is necessary to establish procedures to be followed during the epidemic to insure continuation of essential public health services and enforcement of health laws.

Now, Therefore, It Is Hereby Ordered That:

1. The state, or its designee, shall establish safe housing locations for homeless individuals affected by COVID-19 in the state (“Michigan Homeless”) in concert with the Department of Health and Human Services (“DHHS”), political subdivisions of this state, and community service agencies.
2. Consistent with Executive Orders and guidance issued by DHHS and federal partners, organizations administering these locations should create clear procedures for social distancing, infection control, quarantining, and isolating individuals in section 1 in non-congregate settings. These settings should be individual rooms, if possible, and must include a method for separating individuals with suspected and confirmed cases of COVID-19 from those not infected so as to reduce the community spread of the disease. Families should remain together to the fullest extent possible.
3. Locations established under this order must meet the basic needs of the Michigan Homeless. This includes—but is not limited to—providing food, linen services, and personal care items including toothpaste, towels, and bathing soap. Communal dining must be prohibited.
4. DHHS must establish administrative and procedural guidelines for locations established under this order. These guidelines must include, but are not limited to, vetting potential hosting sites, establishing criteria for entry, establishing procedures for testing for COVID-19, quarantining and isolating individuals, monitoring health and wellness, performing outreach, facilitating medical transportation, providing appropriate security and medical staffing, and providing childcare if the location is hosting families.
5. Under this order, DHHS, county and local governments, and any other jurisdiction appropriate may contract with third-parties, partner with appropriate community organizations, and accept financial and in-kind support to implement the requirements of this order, consistent with existing local, state, federal, and tribal law.
6. This order shall take effect immediately and remains in effect until vacated or until the declared states of emergency and disaster are terminated.

Dated: April 28, 2020



Robert Gordon
Director