

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Subject: Gasconade County Health Department Stay at Home Order Expiration

Effective Date: April 16, 2020 - 8:00 am

The novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is considered an infectious, highly contagious communicable and dangerous disease and on March 11, 2020 was declared by the World Health Organization to be a pandemic; and on March 13, 2020 the President of the United States declared the outbreak of COVID-19 in the United States constitutes a national emergency and the Governor of the State of Missouri declared a state of emergency within in the State of Missouri; and

The Gasconade County Health Department (GCHD) is authorized by Section 192.280, RSMo. and Missouri Code of State Regulations 19 CSR 20-20.040 to take certain actions to enhance public health and prevent and mitigate the entrance of communicable diseases into Gasconade County, including the authority to prevent the assembling of persons within Gasconade County and the closing of businesses and amusements.

On March 31, 2020 the GCHD implemented a county wide stay at home order due to our inherent location in close proximity to neighboring counties and close proximity to larger metropolitan areas such as the greater St. Louis area (which has the large majority of the cases within the state) we felt that out of an abundance of caution it was in the best interest of the health of our counties residents that we enact this order. Also, we felt at that time the state had not yet issued a statewide stay at home order and did not indicate when or if they would issue one, so we thought we should be proactive and do so.

The order expires on April 16, 2020 at 8:00 am unless a decision is made to extend this date. At this time, and due to the implementation of the statewide order, we feel that it is appropriate that we allow the county's order to expire and we adopt the statewide order. This order we feel covers the necessary restrictions to slow or stop the spread of the COVID-19 if properly followed.

Again, properly following this order will be key to the continued effectiveness of minimizing the spread of this virus. This change does allow the operations of other non-essential businesses; however, it is critical that these businesses strictly adhere to the social distancing rules in each facility. If we determine that in some instances the rules are not being adhered to, we will take appropriate measures up to and including legal actions against these facilities and/or if we start seeing an increasing trend of positive COVID-19 patients then we may implement business or area specific orders.

We would ask that any essential or non-essential business operating during this time closely review their social distancing policies and procedures and document and post these policies within view at their facilities. Businesses that we feel at this time are not physically able to adhere to these rules such as salons, barbers, tanning facilities or any other similar type of facility that must be in close proximity to their clients/customers will not be allowed to operate.

We want to thank all businesses, residents, government officials, health providers, emergency services, etc. with their cooperation with federal, state and local orders up to this point. We just feel that this is a necessary step to ensure the continuation of following these procedures of physical distancing requirements. Please see our website for a copy of the state order and frequently asked questions.