



NEWS RELEASE

Howard County Board of Commissioners
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Howard County making great strides in coronavirus plan.

KOKOMO, IN – More than five weeks ago, Howard County Board of Commissioners began action to protect our community and our most vulnerable populations in the COVID-19 battle by placing countywide restrictions to help flatten the curve. As a result of this swift approach, area hospitals remain capable of providing healthcare services to all citizens, regardless of condition.

Today, after consultation with the Howard County Health Department and other members of the local medical community, as well as working toward aligning with Governor Eric Holcomb's executive order, the Commissioners will begin to implement a plan to move our community forward past the virus that is most appropriate and will ensure the health and safety of its residents.

The plan takes a slow and steady approach to permit limited businesses to provide some services with very specific guidelines. Opening businesses that are considered low risk, with little to no human contact, is the key to maintaining social distancing. These services are easily accomplished while one person is out getting the essential items that families need. Staying at home is still critically important as we work to get to the other side of this pandemic. The Orange Travel Advisory remains in effect.

"I recommend that Howard County start to open up certain service businesses, slowly, during this COVID-19 crisis and am comfortable with allowing some businesses to open that provide support services and do not put themselves or their customers at high risk of spread of the virus," said Dr. Martha Hoshaw. "These businesses don't have the risks of customers gathering

in large groups, have the ability of employees social distancing and practicing good hygiene when at work, and they have the ability for customers to practice social distancing when briefly interacting with the business.”

They include:

- Lawn Care/Landscaping – must be able to operate with social distancing requirements and meet all CDC requirements
- Pet Groomers – pet drop off and pick up at door
- Florist – shops not open to public, only delivery to funeral homes and residences with contactless front porch delivery/drop off
- Carwash – no touch washing
- Dry Cleaning, Uniform Shops – emphasis on supporting medical community and first responders – drop off and pick up.
- Bike Repair – drop off and pick up only
- Computer Repair – drop off and pick up only

“Based on advice from medical experts, we have been given the assurance that our stay-at-home, flatten the curve message has been working. The services represented by these businesses are consistent with our work,” said Commissioner Paul Wyman. “As a community we have had some of the toughest restrictions around the state, and based on our successes to this point, this provides us an opportunity to begin to match up with the state’s directive, while maintaining our local efforts to get to the other side of this crisis.”

Dr. Don Zent, Howard County Health Officer with the Howard County Health Department, supports the plan and the opening of select businesses and services identified as low risk.

“This approach is based on the fact that maintaining good public health practices, including social distancing, and personal hygiene, will continue to slow the transmission of COVID-19 within our community,” Dr. Zent said. “The concept of ‘stay at home’ is still important especially for the most vulnerable populations, the elderly, and those with underlying health problems. This appears to be the most appropriate course of action at this time.”

Looking forward, the Commissioners will continue to assess Howard County’s situation and will be working toward coinciding with the Governor’s executive order 20-18 on April 20, 2020, provided positive progress continues.

“I would like to thank the community for working together and staying home as much as possible. This has put us in a good position to look forward beyond this crisis, while still maintaining efforts to ensure the safety of our community.” said, Jack Dodd, commissioner.

“This crisis has been like no other our community has experienced. There is no playbook for it however, I believe all of us working together has enabled our community to not only address immediate concerns, but allow us to plan for our future,” said Brad Bray, commissioner.

Under review are non-essential retail establishments to have the opportunity for internet orders with curbside delivery.

“In planning with my fellow Commissioners Bray and Dodd, our goal has always been to get Howard County open for business when the time was appropriate. Based on the success of our plan so far, it is appropriate to do so incrementally, slowly, and with a solid plan in place, supported by the medical community,” Wyman said. “Our message of staying at home as much as possible during this time is not changing, it is how we will ultimately win this battle and get more of Howard County reopen for business.”