DISTRICT COURT

31st Judicial District of Michigan

Alexis G. Krot
District Judge

Benjamin Ruby
Administrator

Administrative Order 2020 -

PLAN TO RETURN TO FULL CAPACITY: PHASE ONE

In accordance with Administrative Order 2020-14, effective May 6, 2020, and upon approval of the State Court Administrative Office (SCAO), the chief judge of the 31st District Court has consulted with the local health department and determined that gating criteria is satisfied as of June 9, 2020. Specifically:

1. There have been no COVID-19 confirmed or suspected cases in the court facility within a 14-day period; and,

2. There is a downward trajectory of documented cases within a 14-day period; and,

3. State and local orders restricting movement and/or requiring shelter-in-place have been rescinded or limited and the SCAO has determined that existing orders would not prevent the court from implementing Phase One requirements; and,

4. The chief judge has obtained data (attached) confirming that regional health care facilities are able to treat all patients without crisis care.

A. In order to protect the health and safety of employees and the public, the 31st District Court has enacted the following protections:

   1. Employees will self-screen for COVID-19 symptoms. Employees who feel sick or have any COVID-19 symptoms will not report to work. Employees who feel sick or display symptoms at work will be sent home.[1]

   2. Court employees have been surveyed and those employees who have self-identified as a vulnerable employee and unable to return to work have been offered appropriate accommodations, including the ability to work remotely if their job lends itself to remote work.

   3. To the extent possible, court employees who are working remotely will be

[1] Guidance on COVID-19 symptoms is evolving rapidly. The most up-to-date information about symptoms of COVID-19 are available on the CDC website at https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html

allowed the opportunity to work remotely.

4. Employees in court facilities will maintain social distancing of six feet at all times and wear masks when six-foot physical distance cannot be maintained. The court has taken the following steps to ensure proper social distancing and employee safety:

    a. Placed physical barriers between workspaces that are not at least six feet apart.

    b. Marked the floor in common spaces to indicate six-foot intervals.

    c. Required employees to wear masks while in public spaces.

    d. Required employees handling mail to wear masks and gloves.

    e. Implemented staggered shifts of employees to reduce crowd size and the risk of people gathering at start and close times.

    f. Coordinated and authorized work from home opportunities to reduce the number of employees in the facility at any one time.

5. Employees will practice good hygiene through hand washing, frequent disinfecting of used items and surfaces, sneezing or coughing into a tissue or elbow, and avoiding touching their faces.

6. Employees will not travel for non-essential business.

7. Employees have been trained regarding COVID-19. The training included good hygiene practices, updated personnel policies, and safety controls at the court facilities.

8. Court facilities have posted signage emphasizing proper handwashing.

9. Shared equipment will be cleaned and sanitized before each use. Examples of shared equipment include copiers, fax machines, and telephones used by more than one employee during a single shift or in consecutive shifts. This equipment should be wiped down with disinfectant or a disinfectant wipe between uses.

10. The court is following the CDC guidance on cleaning and disinfecting if the facility is exposed to COVID-19.

11. The court has developed a contact tracing policy and is prepared to implement contact tracing procedures after receiving notification that the court facility has had confirmed exposure to COVID-19. These procedures will help the court identify individuals who may have been exposed to COVID-19 and will identify exposure locations that need to be cleaned and disinfected pursuant to CDC guidelines.

B. The 31st District Court is/are enacting the following measures related to public entry into court facilities:

1. The public will be screened by court personnel or security prior to entering the court building. Screening questions will include, but are not limited to the following:

    a. Do you have a fever greater than 100.4 degrees? [Public will be screened using touchless thermometer to verify]

    b. Do you have a cough or worsening cough (excluding chronic cough due to known medical reason)?

    c. Do you have shortness of breath?

    OR

    d. Do you have at least two of the following symptoms:
        - Fever
        - Chills
        - Repeated shaking with chills
        - Muscle pain
        - Headache
        - Sore throat
        - New loss of taste or smell

    e. Have you had any close contact in the last 14 days with someone with a COVID-19 diagnosis?

    f. Have you traveled internationally in the last 14 days?

    Any individual responding "yes" to the screening questions will not be allowed to enter the courthouse until they can pass the screening questions. Screening personnel will notify the court of any individual that does not make it past screening. The court will accept documents for filing from the person. If the person was scheduled to appear as a party at a court proceeding, the court will work to reschedule the hearing/trial to either a remote proceeding or to a future date when the person may pass courthouse screening. The court must provide appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) to any personnel responsible for in-person screening.

C. In order to facilitate the essential business of the court, the court is/are enacting the following measures related to court proceedings:

1. Proceedings will be conducted virtually to the maximum extent possible, consistent with Administrative Order No. 2020-6.

2. In-person court proceedings will be limited to no more than 10 people.

3. Members of the public are required to wear face masks to the extent they can medically tolerate it. They will/will not be provided by the court prior to entry.

4. Pursuant to MCR 8.110(c), members of the public or staff who refuse to wear required face coverings or adhere to social distancing requirements may be asked to leave the court facility.

5. Any member of the public who is asked to leave the court facility must be offered an opportunity to conduct court business virtually, attend court proceedings virtually, file documents in an alternative manner, or confer with court administration to determine alternate arrangements for accessing the court.

The 31st District Court is/are regularly meeting with local public health officials to monitor local public health conditions related to COVID-19 and is/are continuously evaluating data to assess their readiness to proceed to Phase Two of court capacity, which is anticipated to be July 1, 2020.

Date: 06/09/2020

Alexis G Krot
Chief District Judge