

From: [President Mark S. Schlissel](#)
To: hjablon@umich.edu
Subject: County Stay in Place order and course format changes
Date: Tuesday, October 20, 2020 2:55:24 PM

To All Members of the Campus Community:

COVID-19 cases are increasing on our campus, and in the region, state, and nation. As we noted last Friday in our weekly briefing, increases among students both on and off campus are heightening the pressure on our case investigators, contact tracers, and quarantine and isolation housing capacity.

Today, the Washtenaw County Health Department, in collaboration with the university, issued a 14-day Stay in Place order for our undergraduate students, which goes into effect immediately. We fully support this action, as it enhances protections for our students and the welfare of our community. We also are implementing steps beyond the order out of an abundance of caution and to provide choices for students and instructors, including moving more of our undergraduate courses to fully remote instruction.

We want to thank everyone who has been diligent in following public health guidelines, and the many thousands of students and employees who have supported community health and safety. Your commitment to everyone's safety will be an enormous help to our community for the rest of the semester and beyond. The good work of so many will be crucial as we navigate the closing weeks of the semester.

County Stay in Place order details

Under the Washtenaw County order, U-M undergraduate students living in on-campus, near-campus or off-campus housing in Ann Arbor will be required to stay in place and remain in their current designated residence. The full set of restrictions is spelled out by the county [here](#).

The county's order is preventive, as the document notes that "COVID-19 cases among 18-24-year-old persons, thus far in Washtenaw County, have not resulted in increased hospitalization or death rates. Additionally, thus far, the increased incidence in 18-24-year-old persons has not been linked to increased incidence in other populations in Washtenaw County. Additional preventive efforts are necessary to ensure that this remains so." The order will be in place until at least Nov. 3.

Exceptions to the order include leaving a residence to attend class; pick up food, medication and other basic needs; for medical appointments; voting or volunteering as poll workers; attending religious practice activities; or obtaining COVID-19 testing. The order also specifies that undergraduate students can leave their residences for purposes of physical activity outdoors in groups of no more than two if appropriate preventive measures are followed.

The order addresses social gatherings, which have been identified as the main cause of recent COVID-19 spread on campus, in the surrounding community and the broader region. Most of the cases on our campus can be traced back to small- and medium-size gatherings without appropriate face coverings and social distancing.

The order is an important intervention to reduce the spread of the virus, and it reflects the university's close partnership with the county. We have been coordinating on COVID-19

since before the early days of the crisis. Today's order is in addition to the enhanced social distancing order for residents of Mary Markley Hall issued last week.

Undergraduate course format and other changes

Even though the risk of classroom transmission remains low – and the increasing COVID-19 transmission we are seeing is not due to our classrooms and labs – we are issuing new guidelines for undergraduate course delivery to go into effect tomorrow and continue for the remainder of the semester. For undergraduate students, all classes that are substantially enhanced by in-person instruction due to the nature of the instruction or space or equipment needs will continue to be taught in person. Most other undergraduate classes will be taught fully remotely.

We're taking this additional step to exercise an abundance of caution, while also making it as simple as possible for undergraduate students to comply with the order, provide choices for students and instructors, and to support those students who may choose to leave Ann Arbor and finish their semester from home.

Each school or college will manage the process to enable exceptions for instructors who wish to continue teaching courses in person, for instructional reasons. Instructors who will continue to teach in person are expected to notify their students.

Undergraduates will not be allowed to participate in in-person research and scholarship. However, senior students engaged in in-person research and scholarship for credit as part of a class or a thesis project can work with research leadership in their particular unit to request an exception. Undergraduates with campus jobs will still be able to go to work with the consent of their supervisors – under public health protocols.

Choices for leaving campus

With the shift to more remote instruction, and the increased stress we know this kind of measure can add to an already challenging semester, students may choose to return to their permanent homes depending on comfort levels and individual circumstances.

The county health department order says that students who live in U-M housing may only return to their permanent address if they follow U-M testing and checkout procedures (to be provided soon) to lower the risk that they might carry disease home with them. Our procedures will include COVID-19 testing, which the university will provide. For students who live in Michigan Housing or have Dining plans, and who wish to return to their permanent residence, we are working out details to provide prorated room and board refunds or credits. Such refunds will be subject to potential financial aid implications that will need to be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

Once a student returns home, for safety reasons they will need to remain home.

Earlier this week in an effort to provide more COVID-19 testing opportunities for Michigan Housing residents, the university sent an email offering additional testing locations for the upcoming week of October 19 through its [Community Sampling & Tracking Program](#).

Why these steps were taken

- Stay in Place protocols and moving to increased remote instruction were amongst the

potential [mitigation strategies](#) we shared earlier this semester. The response metrics that led us to this decision include increasing use of our isolation and quarantine housing, more than 70 new cases per million in Washtenaw County, the Markley cluster likely having more than 100 close contacts, five days of sustained increases in cases, and inability to perform prompt case investigation and contact tracing.

- Wastewater testing has validated our mapping of COVID-19 on campus. We're seeing the virus most prevalently in areas we expect – in our quarantine and isolation housing and in hill-area residence halls, which includes Markley.
- To reduce transmission and assist our case investigators, we urge everyone to please wear your face coverings, rigorously maintain social distance, reduce gathering sizes (and comply with the county order for undergraduates), complete daily symptom checks using [ResponsiBLUE](#), and be vigilant, especially when you are indoors. It is of crucial importance that everyone respond and cooperate honestly and fully with contact tracers, as well. We need the best and most accurate and timely information to be able to optimally target interventions – and avoid broader restrictions. This call for cooperation is also part of the county's action today.

Additional information on today's changes

We'll post any additional changes due to the order on the [Campus Maize and Blueprint site](#), but we want to emphasize that many of our activities will not change.

- Most on-campus services, including our libraries, will continue as they have during this semester, though with increased remote modalities. The Michigan Union will remain open for many services as well.
- The county order exempts Intercollegiate Athletics, so long as practices and competitions occur under medical supervision and regular virus tests are conducted by the Big Ten according to its approved protocols. There has not been documented transmission of COVID-19 among student-athletes in our athletics facilities. U-M supports the league's testing program, and the staff of the Athletic Department are committed to protocols that protect the health of our student-athletes.
- Campus staff will continue their work under the guidelines that have been in place. All who can work remotely must continue to do so.

We know the increase in cases is causing a lot of stress in our community. Please take advantage of the mental health and well-being resources we have in places for [students](#), [campus faculty and staff](#), and [Michigan Medicine employees](#).

More information will be coming soon from Student Life and your schools, colleges and departments. To share further details and address questions, we are moving up the regular Campus COVID-19 Weekly Briefing from Friday to this evening at 5 p.m. An updated invitation will be sent later today. We'll also post the video from the briefing [here](#) when it is ready.

We want to thank the members of the COVID-19 Campus Health Response Committee for the tremendous work that informed these changes. From the start, our plans were designed to be flexible and adaptive based on campus conditions.

We also appreciate everyone in our community who has shared their thoughts and concerns with us. Your commitment to our community and patience as we address the COVID-19 pandemic continues to be essential for our success. Working together, we will bring our Fall semester to a successful conclusion in December. Plans for the Winter 2021 semester will be announced in early November.

Sincerely,

Mark S. Schlissel, M.D., Ph.D.
President

Susan M. Collins, Ph.D.
Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

Martino Harmon, Ph.D.
Vice President for Student Life

Please do not reply to this email, as this address is not monitored. You may send an email to President Schlissel at presoff@umich.edu