



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

March 10, 2020

**MEDIA CONTACTS:**

Dan Tierney: 614-644-0957

Breann Almos: 614-644-0957

## **Governor DeWine Recommends Limiting Large Indoor Gatherings**

(COLUMBUS, Ohio) -- Ohio Governor Mike DeWine today announced that he and Ohio Department of Health Director Amy Acton, M.D. MPH, have recommended that large, indoor gatherings in Ohio be canceled or postponed due to the potential for coronavirus (COVID-19) exposure.

The recommendation comes after consulting with members of the Governor's Health Advisory Group composed of several physicians and health care professionals from the Ohio Hospital Association.

"After consulting with experts, we know that the decisions we make in the next few days and weeks will determine how many lives are lost in Ohio and how long this pandemic will last. Therefore, I'm recommending that Ohio limits a variety of large gatherings in order to protect public health," said Governor DeWine.

*Higher Education:* Governor DeWine has asked all universities and colleges in Ohio to screen students returning to school from international travel or cruises, including, but not limited to, students returning from spring break travel. Governor DeWine also asked that any university-sponsored international travel, non-essential travel, and large gatherings be canceled or postponed. Higher education institutions should also consider offering online/remote learning.

*K – 12 Schools:* Governor DeWine is not currently recommending the closure of elementary, middle, and high schools, however, school administrators should begin planning for that possibility. Parents should also begin planning for the potential that they may need to stay home with their children or find alternate child care solutions.

*Athletics:* Governor DeWine has recommended that all indoor high school, college, and professional sports competitions be held without spectators. He asks that events take place only with athletes, parents, sporting officials, and media. Right now, outdoor sporting events can continue as planned.

*General Large Gatherings:* Generally, Governor DeWine recommends that organizers of any

events involving a large gathering of individuals in close proximity be canceled or postponed, such as parades.

*Religious Institutions:* Governor DeWine recommends that all religious institutions consider limiting practices that could spread germs, such as shaking hands or sharing a communal cup of wine during communion. Those in faith-based communities who are high-risk should consider staying home. Faith-based communities should also consider appropriate outreach to those who may not be able to attend regular services.

*Nursing Homes:* Because nursing homes house Ohio's most high-risk residents, we are recommending that nursing homes screen all visitors, including volunteers and vendors, for symptoms of contagious illnesses.

*Adult and Juvenile Correctional Facilities:* Governor DeWine has ordered that visitations at Ohio's adult and juvenile corrections facilities be suspended. Contractors who are not critical to the workings of the facility will not be granted entrance. Those who are permitted into these facilities will be screened for symptoms of illness and must submit to a temperature reading.

For more information on Ohio's response to COVID-19, visit [www.coronavirus.ohio.gov](http://www.coronavirus.ohio.gov) or call 1-833-4-ASK-ODH.