



Community and Nature . . . in Harmony

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**Village of Homer Glen, Illinois
Public Release – August 25, 2020**

Mayor George Yukich Statement Concerning Resurgence Mitigations Requirements for Region 7

Since last Spring, the Village of Homer Glen has been supportive of the State of Illinois' guidance and assistance as it relates to the COVID-19 pandemic. We have listened and followed the guidelines, which were grounded in fairness and concern for the public health system. We implemented these guidelines, both internally at the Village but also throughout our community. Our community worked together to adapt to our "new normal" and to take care of each other. While we might not have all agreed with everything - we still came together and implemented and supported the Governor's Executive Orders.

Unfortunately, the Village was notified this week of additional COVID-19 mitigation efforts to take effect in Region 7 on August 26. Region 7 includes both Will and Kankakee Counties. This was due to the region's positivity rate exceeding 8% for three consecutive days. Since COVID-19 inception, Will County has experienced 10,830 positive cases, with 355 total deaths. In Homer Glen, there has been 305 positive cases. Since last Spring, Homer Glen residents and businesses have complied with all public health guidelines to slow the spread and not burden our local healthcare system. As of today, 32% of hospital beds and 31% of ICU beds are available in region 7. This is good news, as it shows that our healthcare system is not being overly burdened by COVID-19 cases.

While both myself and the Village Board have been supportive of past mitigation efforts, some of the current resurgence mitigation requirements are concerning. Many of the requirements do not appear to be based on science and seem to be arbitrary. Region 4, which includes the Southwest area of Illinois has been under different resurgence mitigation requirements than our region. Their positivity rates have been higher for a longer period of time, but with fewer restrictions imposed on them. For example, their restaurants have been allowed to remain open for indoor dining. This is not being allowed for our region.

Additionally, there are other requirements that are not based upon any scientific reason or data. For example, the mandated closing of all restaurants by 11:00pm when our



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residents can simply drive less than one mile to an adjacent town and eat and drink until 2am. This arbitrary closing time only serves to hurt our local Homer Glen businesses - with no evidence that it will reduce the positivity rate of our region. The additional requirement of reservations for outdoor tables is also overly burdensome on our local businesses, who are already under enormous stress and limited staffing. How will this lower the positivity rate? Our local businesses are already adhering to masks and social distancing requirements.

The restriction of occupancy to the lesser of 25 guests or 25% of overall room capacity, will essentially shut down the majority of meetings and gatherings - regardless of the overall size of the venue. This again is arbitrary and unfair for larger facilities and venues that have room to spread out and social distance easily but are still restricted to a total of 25 guests. This is a business death sentence to these types of venues. While I can support the 50% or even 25% capacity restrictions - I cannot sit quietly and support the arbitrary number of 25.

The Village contracts with the Will County Sherriff's Department for our public safety and law enforcement needs. However, the State's Phase 4 re-opening plans are guidelines and are not local laws or ordinances. As such, our limited local resources must be devoted to the enforcement of existing ordinances, regulations and laws. We will respectfully defer to the State of Illinois as it relates to the enforcement of these new guidelines. Our businesses should be aware that both the state and local public health departments do have the authority to enforce these mitigation requirements.

The Village and our local businesses continue to be placed in a no-win situation - how to balance the public's health and safety with the dire economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. Our Homer Glen businesses need our support now more than ever. Please shop and dine local. As the Mayor of Homer Glen, I will continue to advocate for public safety measures that I believe are fair and scientifically based. My goal has always been to protect both our residents and our local businesses. I ask everyone in Homer Glen to continue to wear your masks, social distance and be kind to one another. Do your part to eradicate this terrible virus. Thank you.

Stay safe and healthy,

Mayor George Yukich