



# NEWS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**ST. CHARLES COUNTY RESTAURANTS, BARS MUST CLOSE AT 11 P.M.; SCHOOL QUARANTINE AGREEMENT REACHED**  
*Educational efforts on masks and social distancing continue*

**ST. CHARLES COUNTY, MO** – Daily, St. Charles County Government addresses difficult issues involving COVID-19 – increases in case numbers, concerns about keeping children in school, educating residents on how to stay safe and more.

“St. Charles County Government is working hard to keep our kids in school, keep our young adults out of the bars, and keep all of us out of the hospital,” says St. Charles County Executive Steve Ehlmann. “It takes everyone, including school officials, and restaurant and bar owners, to stop the spread of this virus.”

Ehlmann and Director of the St. Charles County Department of Public Health Demetrius Cianci-Chapman, in collaboration with school superintendents, are today announcing an agreement to implement Missouri’s School Reopening and Operating Guidance updates. The State’s updates, announced on Nov. 12 by Missouri Governor Mike Parson, were intended to keep children who are not positive for COVID-19 in the classroom. St. Charles County is adopting the updates as a modification to quarantine to allow teachers and students to stay in the classroom when they are a close contact without symptoms or a positive test. As announced by Governor Parson, the school must have a mask mandate fully enforced. The modified quarantine is related to in-person curricular activities only.

“We look to our partners in the county to assist us in getting our students, faculty and staff through this pandemic while making every effort to continue the education process,” says Bernie DuBray, superintendent of Fort Zumwalt School District. “I believe I can speak for all school districts when I say we appreciate their concern for both health and education safety. As a county, we are working together to determine what is best for everyone during this unprecedented time.”

A second major issue confronting the county involves the threat of disease transmission in bars and night clubs. After 11 p.m., when such businesses in Illinois, St. Louis County and the City of St. Louis are closed, overwhelming crowds make social distancing impossible. Officials fear an even worse situation on Wednesday night, traditionally the busiest night of the year for bars and night clubs. In response, Cianci-Chapman today issued a public health order pertaining to all county restaurants and bars, ordering them to close by 11 p.m., beginning at 12:01 a.m., Wednesday, Nov. 25, until otherwise rescinded.

This action also was in response to a recent announcement from Governor Parson and the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS). Governor Parson’s State of Missouri COVID-19 Public Health Warning last week provided recommendations to communities based upon their localized public health data. The warning places St. Charles County in the State’s Category 1, indicating the county is at “Extreme Risk.” Criteria for Category 1 includes a 7-day polymerase chain reaction (PCR) positivity rate of 15 percent or above and a 7-day case rate per 100,000 of 350 or above.

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“Other jurisdictions in the area have similar orders in place, and we need to make certain that St. Charles County is not a magnet for those who want to stay out late and party in groups,” Ehlmann says. “We need to stem the rise in positive cases in St. Charles County.”

In addition to the bar closings, the County Executive is calling on all residents to join him in doing what is necessary to get the virus under control. In recent weeks the County has put up numerous billboards, sent a mass mailing and utilized social media to make people aware of the potential overcrowding in hospitals. Law enforcement throughout the county has been providing masks to residents and library branches have handed out more than 70,000 masks. On Black Friday, County employees will be at shopping venues throughout the area handing out masks to shoppers.

The guidance from the State about schools especially calls attention to the importance of wearing a mask and wearing it correctly: *“It is important to note that if either the person with COVID-19 or the person exposed to that positive case was not following the school’s mask mandate or was not wearing their mask appropriately during the time of exposure, the close contact should quarantine at home for 14 days.”*

Since the onset of the pandemic, Cianci-Chapman has been meeting with school superintendents to provide guidance for keeping students safe while continuing their education. Information on school guidelines, as well as data regarding school-linked contacts and transmissions is located at [sccmo.org/COVID](https://sccmo.org/COVID).

“As part of our response to the pandemic, our epidemiologists are closely monitoring where transmission occurs and the severity of those outbreaks,” says Cianci-Chapman. “The dynamic nature of our communities and the overwhelming surge of this pandemic requires complex mitigation efforts. We appreciate the understanding of our citizens, the support of businesses and the collaboration of schools to help protect our citizens’ health, education and economy.”

Ehlmann says, “I speak regularly with our St. Charles County hospital leaders and they are telling me they are on the verge of having an insufficient number of nurses, doctors and beds to care for patients. Whether someone contracts COVID and needs hospitalization, visits the ER, or requires care for other medical emergencies, the ability for our hospital to provide the healthcare our residents need and expect is being threatened each day.”

To view the Public Health Order, visit [sccmo.org/COVID](https://sccmo.org/COVID).

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### **About St. Charles County:**

*Founded in 1812, St. Charles County is one of the fastest growing counties in Missouri, and the state’s third largest county in both population and economic share. It is home to 17 scenic county parks encompassing nearly 4,000 acres and additional land under development and more in reserve for future development.*

*With a population of 402,022, St Charles County is home to large employers including General Motors, Citi, MasterCard Worldwide and Boeing. It is ranked among the top 25 counties in the nation in high-tech job growth by the Progressive Policy Institute and consistently has the lowest unemployment rate in the Metropolitan St. Louis area.*

*St. Charles County Government employs nearly 1,100 in more than 30 departments and offices, who work to make the county an excellent place to live, work and shop. For more information, please visit [sccmo.org](https://sccmo.org).*