



## OFFICE OF GOVERNOR **ROY COOPER**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **North Carolina to Move to Phase 2.5**

*After a summer of hard work to slow the spread of COVID-19, North Carolina can take a modest step to ease some restrictions*

*North Carolinians must stay vigilant on mask wearing and social distancing*

*Read the [Executive Order](#)*

**RALEIGH:** Governor Roy Cooper today announced that after a summer of hard work to slow the spread of COVID-19, North Carolina will take a modest step forward move into Phase 2.5 starting this Friday, September 4<sup>th</sup> at 5pm. Mask mandates and other prevention methods remain in effect and are even more important to contain the virus, Cooper said.

“Safer at Home Phase 2.5 continues our state’s dimmer switch approach to easing some restrictions,” said Governor Cooper. “We can do this safely only if we keep doing what we know works — wearing masks and social distancing. In fact, a new phase is exactly when we need to take this virus even more seriously.”

Dr. Mandy Cohen, Secretary of the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services shared an update on North Carolina’s data trends. Dr. Cohen explained that North Carolina has seen stability in our key metrics.

“As we take modest steps forward today, it’s important to remember that moving forward doesn’t mean letting up on slowing the spread of the virus. Our progress is fragile and we need to maintain focus on the 3Ws especially as we head into flu season,” said NCDHHS Secretary Mandy K. Cohen, MD.

#### **Trajectory in COVID-Like Illness (CLI) Surveillance Over 14 Days**

- North Carolina’s syndromic surveillance trend for COVID-like illness continues to decline.

#### **Trajectory of Lab-Confirmed Cases Over 14 Days**

- North Carolina’s trajectory of lab-confirmed cases is stable.

#### **Trajectory in Percent of Tests Returning Positive Over 14 Days**

- North Carolina’s trajectory in percent of tests returning positive is stable.

#### **Trajectory in Hospitalizations Over 14 Days**

- North Carolina’s trajectory of hospitalizations is declining.

Although these numbers are still stable or declining, they remain high. In addition to these metrics, the state continues building capacity to be able to adequately respond to prevent virus spread. These areas include:

### **Laboratory Testing**

- The state continues to have testing capacity and lab turnaround times are averaging two days. However, fewer people are getting tested. Anyone who has symptoms or has been exposed should get tested. There are supports available to help people who may face challenges in being able to miss work or safely stay home.

### **Tracing Capability**

- The state continues hiring contact tracers to bolster the efforts of local health departments.

### **Personal Protective Equipment**

- North Carolina's personal protective equipment (PPE) supplies are stable.

Phase 2.5 means the following for North Carolina:

- Mass gathering limits will increase to 25 people indoors and 50 people outdoors from the current limit of 10 indoors and 25 outdoors.
- Playgrounds may open.
- Museums and aquariums may open at 50% capacity.
- Gyms and indoor exercise facilities, such as yoga studios, martial arts, and rock climbing, as well as skating rinks, bowling alleys, indoor basketball, volleyball etc., may open at 30% capacity.
- Bars, nightclubs, movie theaters, indoor entertainment facilities, amusement parks, dance halls will remain closed.
- Large venues remain subject to the mass gathering limits.

In addition, NCDHHS Secretary Mandy Cohen issued a Secretarial Order allowing for outdoor visitation at nursing homes or skilled nursing facilities. To participate, nursing homes must meet several requirements, including, but not limited, not having a current outbreak, having a testing plan and updated written Infection Control or Preparedness plan for COVID-19, and having adequate personal protective equipment. The Secretarial Order is effective as of September 4 at 5 PM and remains in effect through September 22, 2020.

View the [slides and graphs](#) from today's presentation.

Read the [Executive Order](#).

Read the [Secretarial Order](#).

Read the [Frequently Asked Questions](#).

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