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Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.
Shelby County Health Department

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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HEALTH DIRECTIVE No. 19 LIFTS MORE RESTRICTIONS ON BUSINESSES FACE MASK DIRECTIVE NO. 5 CLARIFIES, UPDATES FACE MASK REQUIREMENTS

Shelby County, TN – The Shelby County Health Department issues Health Directive No. 19 today to go into effect at midnight on March 20th. Health Directive No. 19 further lifts restrictions on businesses, particularly restaurants that serve the public. It is accompanied by Face Mask Directive No. 5, which clarifies and updates guidance about mask usage in certain public settings.

Key changes in Health Directive No. 19:

- Increase in number of people at tables to 8 instead of 6.
- Persons seated together must be of the same family unit or close contact group.
- Bartenders are encouraged to wear a face shield or double mask while serving multiple groups at the bar, but are not required to do so.
- Operating hours for dine-in service ends at 1 am (customers may stay until 1:30 to complete meal/payment arrangements).
- Two hour limit for food service is removed.
- Any location that serves beer or alcohol must serve food as required by state law (and have a permit to do so).
- Removes the requirement of maintaining contact tracing records.

Key changes in Face Mask Directive No. 5:

- Medical or procedure grade masks are recommended but not required; coverings which are made of suitable layered fabrics are acceptable but scarves, ski masks, and balaclavas are not substitutes for masks.
- Persons who cannot medically tolerate wearing a face covering are not required to wear a face shield, and no person declining to wear a face covering because of a medical condition is required to produce verifying medical documentation.

While the COVID-19 virus remains a threat, these revisions are deemed allowable now because our community has experienced reduced transmission of the virus for a period of greater than 14 days.

- Viral reproductive rate in Shelby County is currently estimated at 0.84 and has remained less than 1.0 since early January.
- Case numbers have continued to decline since early January.
- Weekly COVID-19 test positivity rates are the lowest they have been since October.

For more information about Shelby County's response to the pandemic, please visit our COVID-19 informational page: www.shelby.community.

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