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**Athens County Health Department recommendation for local government.**

The President of the United States has declared a federal state of emergency for all states and territories in response to COVID-19. According to an executive order signed by Governor DeWine on Sunday, March 15, all restaurants and bars in Ohio can only provide pick-up or delivery services to increase social distancing. Unemployment benefits are being strengthened for service workers in Ohio (unemployment.ohio.gov). The Governor is also encouraging those with children in day care, to think about a plan for future closures.

During Monday’s press conference, Governor DeWine expanded closures specifically listing gyms, indoor recreation centers, bowling alleys, and movie theatres. The Governor also reduced the number of people who can gather from 100 to 50 per a Director of Health order. President Trump, in a press conference late Monday afternoon, further limited social interactions by a recommendation to limiting gatherings to less than 10 people.

It has become clear that our Federal and State legislators as well as public health policymakers are taking drastic measures to limit our physical interactions. In support of those actions it is the recommendation of the Athens City-County Health Department that all local government agencies move to an essential services model and limit personnel to only those necessary to provide those services. Please keep in mind that this is only a recommendation and each agency should vet any decisions regarding services and staffing with their appropriate leadership body.

These are unprecedented times and are grateful for your continued cooperation and support.

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