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By Chris at 12:17 pm, Jul 29, 2020

Government & Regulations

North Carolina Gov. Roy Cooper issues order requiring masks, delays phase 3 of reopening plan



North Carolina Gov. Roy Cooper, right, during a briefing on the coronavirus situation

MEHMET DEMIRCI

RECOMMENDED

GOVERNMENT & REGULATIONS

Ivey extends Alabama's mask order 🔑



COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE

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GOVERNMENT & REGULATIONS

Milwaukee's phase 4.1 order to include mask mandate, options for schools



By Erik Spanberg
– Managing Editor,
Charlotte Business Journal

Jun 24,
2020,
5:27pm EDT

IN THIS ARTICLE

Coronavirus

Topic

Dennis Taylor

Person

Gene Woods

Person

Gibbie Harris

Person

Government &

North Carolinians must wear face coverings in

Regulations

Industry

Mandy Cohen

Person

Roy Cooper

Person

public
beginning
Friday
afternoon and
the state will
not loosen any
of its current
Covid-19
restrictions for
at least three
more weeks,
Gov. [Roy
Cooper](#) said
Wednesday
afternoon.

The state
entered its
second of three
reopening
phases on May
22. The third
phase was to
have started
June 26 – this
Friday – but the
governor and
the secretary of
health and
human services
pointed to
problematic

trends as cause
for not moving
ahead as
planned.

North Carolina's
number of
patients
hospitalized
with the disease
reached its
single-day
record on
Tuesday and
next-highest
level on
Wednesday.

Hospitalizations
have increased
by 56% during
the last month,
a period that
aligns with the
end of the stay-
at-home order.

The number of
positive tests as
a percentage of
all administered
remains well
above the
preferred level

of 5% – it's 8%
now – while the
number of lab-
confirmed cases
continues to
climb as does
the number of
people
reporting
Covid-19
symptoms.
Another 1,721
positive tests
were confirmed
Wednesday, the
second-highest
total since the
pandemic
started in
March.

Cooper's
executive order
puts the onus
on businesses
to enforce the
face-covering
requirement.
According to
the executive
order, citations
will be issued to

businesses or organizations that fail to enforce the order.

“Responsibility here is on the businesses and the organizations,” he said.

Customers can be cited for trespassing if they refuse to wear a mask inside a store or other public place where social distancing is not possible.

There are some exceptions based on pre-existing health conditions, anyone under age 11 (though they are recommended

for people 2 and up), people who are delivering public remarks or broadcasting, and for outdoor strenuous exercise as well as when eating or drinking.

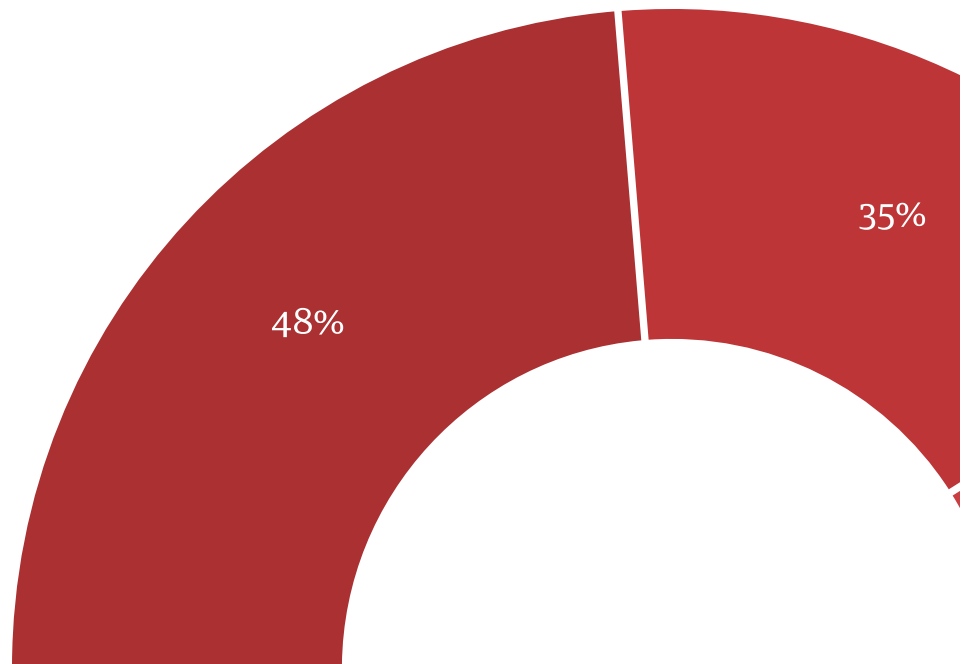
Businesses required to have workers and customers wearing masks include retail stores, all restaurant workers and customers until they have been seated at a table, child-care facilities, day camps, overnight camps, state government, public transportation, meat and

poultry
processing
plants, long-
term care
centers, and
health-care
offices and
treatment

“This is the right decision for North Carolina right now,” C
centers.

BUSINESS PULSE POLL

Do you wear a face mask when you leave your home?



48%

Yes

35%

No

18%

Sometimes

Total number of responses: **818**

This poll is not a scientific sampling. It offers a quick view of what readers are think

Several times,
the governor
and Dr. Mandy
Cohen,
secretary of the
N.C.
Department of
Health and
Human
Services,
emphasized the
need to level off
Covid-19 trends
in order to
allow schools to
reopen on time
in August and
to meet the
targeted July 17
date to loosen
restrictions on
certain
businesses.

Gene Woods,
CEO of

Charlotte-based
Atrium Health,
made a similar
case.

“As the leader
of the state’s
largest health
system, I am
pro-health and
also 100% pro-
business,” said
Woods, who
attended and
spoke at the
governor’s news
briefing. “In
fact, the two are
inextricably
connected and
I’m very proud
of the way
business
leaders and
health experts
are working
together to keep
our economy
strong.”

Another guest
speaker, Dennis
Taylor, head of

the N.C. Nurses Association, joined Woods in making an impassioned plea for residents to wear masks, wash their hands often and keep 6 feet apart from others as much as possible.

“Follow the science,” Woods said. “The science says masking works.”

Hitting pause on North Carolina’s reopening means that bars, playgrounds, gyms, fitness centers, museums, and mass

entertainment
centers must
remain closed.
Cooper said
playgrounds,
gyms, fitness
centers, and
museums
would open
July 17 if cases,
testing and
hospitalization
trends level off
over the next
three weeks.

Asked
specifically
about when
bars will
reopen, Cooper
did not answer.
State
lawmakers
passed bills to
reopen gyms
and bars early
and the
governor
vetoed both.
Asked about an
attempted

override,
Cooper said the
Covid-19 trends
and numbers
make clear this
is not the time
for those
businesses to
reopen.

Phil Berger (R-
Rockingham),
the N.C. Senate
president,
slammed
Cooper's
decision in a
statement
issued
Wednesday.

“In Roy
Cooper's North
Carolina, the
Governor can
walk with a
group of
protesters with
no mask on, but
you can't take
your son or
daughter to a
playground,”

Berger said.
“Rioters can
break windows
and set fires
with impunity,
but you can’t
exercise on an
elliptical
machine. We’re
assured that
masses of mask-
less people
gathered
together in the
streets caused
no rise in cases,
yet we’re now
all required to
wear masks
because the
danger is too
great. The
inconsistencies
and hypocrisy
continue to eat
away at the
trust in and
credibility of
this
administration.”
Wednesday,
North Carolina

has had more than 56,000 people test positive for Covid-19, with 1,266 virus-related deaths. Mecklenburg County, with 9,333 cases and 147 deaths, has the most cases in the state and is also the state's most populous county. Wake County is next at 4,253; combined, the three Triangle counties – Wake, Durham and Orange – have had 8,140 people infected since March.

Gibbie Harris, public health director of

Mecklenburg County, said again this week that she is concerned with case trends and the lack of social distancing practiced by residents.

Social-distancing and mobility trends are back near pre-pandemic levels, she said.

Woods disclosed a partnership between Atrium, the Carolina Panthers, Bank of America, Honeywell, Blue Cross Blue Shield of North

Carolina,
Lowe's and
Red Ventures
to donate 1
million face
coverings to
people in need
in the coming
weeks.

Earlier
Wednesday,
Mecklenburg
County's
business
roundtable
discussed a
forthcoming
public-
awareness
campaign that
will urge
people to wear
masks and
practice social
distancing.
The privately
funded effort
will be
enhanced by
\$500,000 of
federal

recovery funds
county
commissioners
have allocated
for a Covid-19
awareness and
prevention

campaign.
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