Public Health Guidance for the Holidays

Due to the ongoing spread of COVID-19, rising death toll and overload of the state’s critical care infrastructure, the Mississippi State Department of Health is making the following recommendations to limit transmission of COVID-19 throughout the holidays:

- Most transmission occurs from individuals who do not know that they are infected with COVID-19.
- Household contact is the single most important risk factor for contracting COVID-19.
- Although severe illness can occur at any age or state of health, death and severe illness are more frequent among those over 60 years of age or with chronic medical conditions.
- High risk activities include:
  - Sharing meals
  - Sharing close proximity with others indoors
  - Not wearing masks or face coverings

It is, therefore, important to conduct holidays gatherings in a manner that recognizes that anyone we come in contact with could be contagious with COVID-19.

Primary Guidance:

- **All Mississippians are urged to celebrate the holidays only with those with whom they live (household members or nuclear family).**
- **Masks should be worn at all times when in public.**
- **Avoid all mass gatherings including religious services. Choose virtual services.**

Secondary Guidance:
For those unable to comply with elements of the Primary Guidance above, please conform with the following guidance to prevent the transmission of COVID-19 and protect the most vulnerable:

- **All indoor social gatherings must be limited to 10 or less participants. This is a statewide requirement per Governor’s Executive Order dated 12/11/2020.**
- **Maintain a minimum of 6 feet from non-household members during any gathering.**
- **Wear a mask during indoors gatherings with non-household members.**
- **Eat meals only in close proximity to those in your immediate household.**
- **Limit the durations of gatherings to as short a time period as possible.**
- **Conduct gatherings outdoors as much as possible.**

We must all do our part to limit transmission of COVID-19. By limiting proximity to others, avoiding indoor gatherings, and wearing masks in public, Mississippians can save countless lives and preserve scarce healthcare resources.