MESSAGE ID:	**MSHAN-20210329-00511-ALT (Health Alert)**
RECIPIENTS:	**All Physicians, Hospitals, ERs, ICPs, NPs, and Healthcare Providers – Statewide**
	Monday, March 29, 2021
SUBJECT:	**Updated Guidance for Safer Faith Based Gatherings and Worship Services**

To prevent the spread of COVID-19 and to protect the vulnerable, the safest options continue to be virtual or outdoor services.

For those meeting indoors, please follow these guidelines.

1) Everyone 65 years of age or older **should be fully vaccinated** against COVID-19 prior to attending in-person worship services (2 weeks after completing vaccination).
2) Anyone 16 or older with high-risk medical conditions **should be fully vaccinated** against COVID-19 prior to attending in-person worship services (2 weeks after completing vaccination). For a list of high-risk medical conditions, visit: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-with-medical-conditions.html
3) MSDH recommends that everyone 16 and older be vaccinated against COVID-19, even if the person had COVID-19 in the past.
4) In-door safety guidance:
    a. All congregants should wear a face-mask at all times during in-person services.
    b. All congregants should maintain 6 feet separation from members outside of the household. Household members may sit together.
    c. Congregants should not gather in close groups while entering or exiting the building.
    d. Congregants should use hand sanitizer prior to or upon entry of the building.
    e. Singing is a high-risk activity. It is preferable to not have choirs – but if choirs are performing, they should be small in number, masked, and separated by 6 feet.
    f. Those in classroom settings, such as Sunday School or study groups, should maintain at least 6 feet of separation and wear a mask at all times.
    g. As appropriate, alternatives to shared cups for communion should be pursued.
    h. The use of hymn books or prayer books is acceptable so long as congregants practice proper hand hygiene upon entering.
5) Additional procedures to protect congregants are encouraged based on local congregation leadership decisions.

Regards,
Thomas Dobbs, MD, MPH
State Health Officer

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Alerting Message Specification Settings

Originating Agency:	Mississippi State Department of Health
Alerting Program:	MS Health Alert Network (MS HAN)
Message Identifier:	MSHAN-20210329-00511-ALT
Program (HAN) Type:	Health Alert
Status (Type):	Actual ()
Message Type:	Alert
Reference:	MSHAN-00511
Severity:	Unknown
Acknowledgement:	No
Sensitive:	Not Sensitive
Message Expiration:	Undetermined
Urgency:	Undetermined
Delivery Time:	600 minutes

Definition of Alerting Vocabulary and Message Specification Settings

Originating Agency: A unique identifier for the agency originating the alert.

Alerting Program: The program sending the alert or engaging in alerts and communications using PHIN Communication and Alerting (PCA) as a vehicle for their delivery.

Message Identifier: A unique alert identifier that is generated upon alert activation (MSHAN-yyymmdd-hhmm-TTT (**ALT=Health Alert, ADV=Health Advisory**, **UPD=Health Update**, **MSG/INFO=Message/Info Service**).

Program (HAN) Type: Categories of Health Alert Messages**.**

Health Alert: Conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

Health Advisory: Provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.

Health Update: Provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.

Health Info Service: Provides Message / Notification of general public health information; unlikely to require immediate action.

Status (Type):

	Actual:	Communication or alert refers to a live event
	Exercise:	Designated recipients must respond to the communication or alert
	Test:	Communication or alert is related to a technical, system test and should be disregarded

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Message Type:

Alert:	Indicates an original Alert
Update:	Indicates prior alert has been Updated and/or superseded
Cancel:	Indicates prior alert has been cancelled
Error:	Indicates prior alert has been retracted

Reference: For a communication or alert with a Message Type of "Update" or "Cancel", this attribute contains the unique Message Identifier of the original communication or alert being updated or cancelled. "n/a" = Not Applicable.

Severity:

Extreme:	Extraordinary threat to life or property
Severe:	Significant threat to life or property
Moderate:	Possible threat to life or property
Minor:	Minimal threat to life or property
Unknown:	Unknown threat to life or property

Acknowledgement: Indicates whether an acknowledgement on the part of the recipient is required to confirm that the alert was received, and the timeframe in which a response is required (Yes or No).

Sensitive:

Sensitive:	Indicates the alert contains sensitive content
Not Sensitive:	Indicates non-sensitive content

Message Expiration: Undetermined.

Urgency: Undetermined. Responsive action should be taken immediately.

Delivery Time: Indicates the timeframe for delivery of the alert (15, 60, 1440, 4320 minutes (.25, 1, 24, 72 hours)).

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