



The Week in COVID

This past week found the PHTA team focusing on state and federal issues, expanded communications, and public health outreach.

STATE OUTREACH



MICHIGAN

On April 24, 2020, Governor Whitmer issued a [press release](#) and a [new Executive Order](#) that extends Michigan's "Stay Home, Stay Safe" order through May 15. The new order lifted some restrictions on outdoor activities and allows some workers who previously were not allowed to work to resume activities. This order took effect immediately.

Specifically, Section 10 of the order permits the resumption of activity by:

(a.) Workers who process or fulfill remote orders for goods for delivery or curbside pick-up.

(d.) Maintenance workers and groundskeepers who are necessary to maintain the safety and sanitation of places of outdoor recreation not otherwise closed under Executive Order 2020-43 or any order that may follow from it, provided that the places and their workers do not provide goods, equipment, supplies, or services to individuals, and subject to the enhanced social-distancing rules described in section 11(h) of this order.

In addition, we were able to obtain the following clarification from the Governor's office in direct response to an inquiry concerning the service and maintenance of pools and hot tubs.

"Pursuant to Executive Order 2020-42 the business is considered essential "If the work is necessary to maintaining the safety, sanitation, and essential operation of residences."

[Read the correspondence from the Governor's office.](#)

OUTCOME/NEXT STEPS

This is great news for our retail and service segments, as we believe this new order provides opportunities for these segments to get back to work, subject to the strict social distancing requirements.



PENNSYLVANIA

Last Thursday, in conjunction with NESPA, PHTA sent a [letter to Governor Wolf](#) noting our support of his intention to open up construction in the Commonwealth on May 1. The letter also identified best practices to consider as they develop safety guidance for the construction industry.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE INDUSTRY?

Although retail is still restricted, Thursday evening, Governor Wolf [issued guidance](#) for all construction businesses and their employees. New construction, renovation, and repair work are allowed to resume on May 1 as long as they follow the Governor's guidance and [the order of the Secretary of Health](#) issued on April 15, which provides for business safety measures.

The Governor's guidance includes the following specific to residential construction:

“All residential construction projects including new construction, renovation, and repair are authorized to conduct in-person operations; however, such projects may not permit more than four persons on the job site at any time inclusive of employees of both prime and subcontractors, but not inclusive of delivery persons, code inspectors, or similar persons who require temporary access to the site and are not directly engaged in the construction activity.”

WHAT YOU NEED TO DO

PHTA recommends that members download a copy of the [Guidance](#) and [Health Order](#) to ensure all COVID safety guidance is being followed.

OUTCOME/NEXT STEPS

PHTA is continuing efforts to reopen retail in Pennsylvania and will keep you apprised as things progress.

[View the Governor's Press Release](#)



MASSACHUSETTS

ISSUE: Massachusetts has significantly limited retail operations with little guidance on what is and is not allowed.

ACTIONS: PHTA is working with Massachusetts lobbyists to ease restrictions in conjunction with the Governor's Order ending on May 4 and an expectation of an extension with certain clarifications.

OUTCOME/NEXT STEPS: PHTA lobbyists provided our [position statement](#) and [public health documentation](#) to the Governor's office. A letter is being drafted to send to the Governor, noting how retail is critical to provide both service professionals and DIY homeowners with the products they need. Additionally, the letter ties the importance of these products to mosquito abatement. This is especially important as the

Commonwealth was struck last season by the Eastern Equine Encephalitis virus - which is transmitted by mosquitoes.

FEDERAL UPDATE



Congress is scheduled to return the week of May 4 and efforts have already begun on the next COVID aid package with a multitude of constituencies lining up for additional significant relief.

Leading contenders on that list include additional aid for front line responders including hazard pay and possible student debt forgiveness, massive aid for state and local governments, specific relief for the oil and gas industry, additional relief for restaurants, small businesses, institutions of higher education and the possibility of additional direct aid payments to individuals and families.

Last week also saw significant action on the implementation of key programs, including public scrutiny of recipients of the Paycheck Protection Act and Department and Agency guidance on how hospitals and institutions of higher education are able to secure funds and how they are allowed to use funds. Click on the links below for sector-specific updates:

[Counties and Municipalities](#)

[Health Care](#)

[Small Businesses](#)

Federal and state officials also started debating and detailing protocols last week for the staged re-opening of state and local economies. Expect significant continued interplay between Governors and Federal officials, both economic and health care decision-makers, on when and how to allow the resumption of economic activities without putting the public at risk of another or even greater resurgence of the spread of COVID-19.

Congress Approves, President Signs Phase 3.5 Relief Bill

The House and Senate passed another coronavirus relief bill, dubbed "Phase 3.5," which was signed by the President last week. This package replenishes funding for the Small

Business Administration's Paycheck Protection Program and Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) program, both of which ran out of money. The bill also added funding to boost the country's medical response to the pandemic with additional aid to hospitals and monies toward national and state-based COVID testing.

Main Street Lending Program (MSLP) Update

To get this program up and running, the Federal Reserve was required to submit reports on [the new loan part](#) and [the expanded loan part](#) to Congress. The Federal Reserve is now creating what it's calling "program infrastructure," which will include funding the Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) at the Reserve Bank that will purchase 95% participation in loans made under the MSLP.

The Federal Reserve is expected to release updated confirmed guidance on both Main Street lending programs this week.

PUBLIC HEALTH



PHTA is creating an Aquatic Facilities Reopening Guidance, seeking input from multiple stakeholders, including the J1 Coalition, the RWQC, the Air Conditioning Contractors of America (regarding indoor air quality), and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

COMMUNICATIONS



Last week, PHTA released the [Coronavirus Toolkit for Pool & Hot Tub Professionals](#) to our members to provide an easy-to-access resource to help you keep your business in business.

Additionally, we launched an 8-week awareness campaign through social media to discuss pool safety for kids and families, as well as share the benefits of having a pool at home. This will be shared on platforms such as on Facebook, Instagram and YouTube. We are anticipating reaching 160,000,000 18-65 year-olds in the U.S. through this campaign.

The image shows a Facebook post from the Pool & Hot Tub Alliance. At the top left is the organization's logo, a circular emblem with a pool and hot tub icon, and the text "Pool & Hot Tub Alliance" and "Sponsored · 🌐". The main text of the post reads: "Planning to spending extra time in the pool while you are staying close to home? Follow our guide to safe swimming." Below this is a large blue graphic with white wavy lines representing water. On the left side of the graphic, the text "Swim Ready?" is written in white. On the right side, there is an illustration of pool maintenance supplies (bottles of chlorine, pH balancer, etc.) and a smartphone displaying a sun icon, with a white arrow pointing to the right. Below the graphic, there are two text boxes. The first box contains the text "Are you ready to swim safely while at home?" and "Simple Steps Save Lives". The second box contains the text "Step 1: Schedule routine water" and "Simple Steps Save Lives". At the bottom of the post are three interaction buttons: "Like", "Comment", and "Share".

To provide guidance and help you and your company navigate COVID-19, make sure to visit our [Coronavirus webpage](#).

If you have any questions, please reach out to phta@phta.org.

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