



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



MASSACHUSETTS

ISSUE: Clarification is needed to allow for pool and hot tub “retail”/showroom stores to be considered an essential business with safe practices, including social distancing, in place. Current guidelines allow for online-based retail.

ACTIONS: PHTA [submitted a letter to Governor Baker](#) on April 28. In the letter, we highlighted the need for pools to be maintained by industry professionals, which for the most part has been the case. However, in order to accomplish this, it is imperative products are available to do so, via industry retail stores.

The letter explained that without proper pool and hot tub maintenance (which includes circulation and treatment of water) various pathogens can grow, such as Pseudomonas, Cryptosporidium, E. Coli, Shigella, etc. It can also create a breeding ground for mosquitoes, other pests and the diseases (West Nile Virus and Zika Virus) they may carry, which presents a risk not only to bathers but to the entire community at large.

Additionally, the Governor has requested the Legislature take steps to ensure the Commonwealth is prepared to respond and work to prevent another spike in Eastern Equine Encephalitis – this mosquito-borne virus was a challenge for Massachusetts last year. The state’s EEE website specifically notes “Keep swimming pools clean and properly chlorinated; remove standing water from pool covers.” In order to accomplish this, it is imperative the products are available to do so, via industry retail stores.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS: Last Tuesday, Governor Baker also extended the Commonwealth’s Stay-At-Home Order until May 18, making the need for clarification on industry retail stores more pressing as warmer weather arrives. In addition to PHTA’s efforts in outreach to the Governor’s office, the Commonwealth has put together a Reopening Advisory Board that includes stakeholder engagement. Initial discussion points that may direct the “road to reopening” in the Commonwealth [can be viewed here](#).

Further details on the phased reopening will be released by May 18. PHTA will continue to advocate for the industry to be able to provide services under the current Order and all phased-in reopening stages. At this time, the guidelines above can be used for direction as things develop and move forward.



ISSUE: Pool and spa construction is still not allowed under MI Orders.

DEVELOPMENTS: On Friday, May 1, the Governor signed three more executive orders, this included [EO 2020-70](#), which extends the Stay-At-Home order through May 15. However, this new order provides for the reopening of certain types of work that are typically outdoors and are considered low risk for spreading the virus. **This includes**

residential and commercial construction, which can resume May 7. Governor Whitmer has issued the following guidance that must be followed in order to operate:

Under the order, construction sites must adopt a set of best practices to protect their workers from infection. Those practices include:

Designating a site supervisor to enforce COVID-19 control strategies.

Conducting daily health screenings for workers.

Creating dedicated entry points, if possible, or issuing stickers or other indicators to assure that all workers are screened every day.

Identifying choke points and high-risk areas (like hallways, hoists and elevators, break areas, water stations, and buses) and controlling them to enable social distancing.

Ensuring sufficient hand-washing or hand-sanitizing stations at the worksite.

As reported last week, the Governor's previous order added in provisions that provided clarity that our service and maintenance industry, as well as retail, could get back to work, following certain guidance. This latest order, not only provides for the opening of the construction segment of our industry, but also adds additional language that states:

*Effective at 12:01 am on May 7, 2020, and subject to the enhanced social-distancing rules described in section 11(h) of this order, **workers who perform work that is traditionally and primarily performed outdoors**, including but not limited to forestry workers, outdoor power equipment technicians, parking enforcement workers, and similar workers.*

It should be noted that this provision provides further backing for our service/maintenance pool and hot tub professionals.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Governor Whitmer also signed three orders on April 30, extending the state of emergency through May 28 under both the Emergency Powers of the Governor Act of 1945 and the Emergency Management act of 1976. The third terminated the existing state of emergency order that was to expire at 11:59 pm on April 30. This was all a result of the legislature not extending the emergency and disaster declaration beyond April 30, which led to the Governor doing so under other statutory authority mechanisms.



PENNSYLVANIA

PHTA continues to work with NESPA to ensure all segments of our industry can work in the Commonwealth. As previously reported, pool and spa service/maintenance are allowed, and construction was able to start back on May 1.

A [joint letter](#) was sent to Governor Wolf on April 29 outlining the importance of access to retailers and wholesalers, asking him to allow businesses that sell pool, hot tub and spa chemicals and other related products to be open for delivery and curbside pickup.

FEDERAL UPDATE



The federal response to the coronavirus pandemic will continue to dominate the congressional agenda for the foreseeable future. The Senate returned Monday to take up executive branch nominations - but it is unclear whether the chamber will act on any coronavirus legislation next week. The House canceled plans to return on Monday, but Speaker Nancy Pelosi announced the House will return the following week.

Meanwhile, House lawmakers are already working on a "CARES 2" package to address the ongoing widespread health and economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Your WSW team will continue to monitor and advise on developments in real-time.

The Next Stimulus Package: Coronavirus, Aid, Relief and Economic Security: CARES 2

Speaker Nancy Pelosi announced this week the Democrat's next emergency package will be a large-scale bill of at least \$1 trillion aimed at direct help for cities and states, as well as additional aid for displaced workers and families displaced by the pandemic crisis.

Speaker Pelosi did not release any specifics. News reports suggest Senate Republicans are not warm to the idea of rushing another massive stimulus package through Congress quickly. The trajectory of COVID-19 cases by state and nationally - as well as how long monies from previous aid packages last for programs like the Paycheck Protection Program - will be the key influences on the timeline for the next package. In addition, the move by several states to begin to reopen portions of their economies - and the success or failure of those efforts - is also top of mind for decision-makers in Washington.

The White House Coronavirus Task Force Issued Additional Testing Guidelines

The White House Coronavirus Task Force released [additional guidelines](#) for States to consider as they are reopening their economies, including a [testing blueprint](#). The testing blueprint is designed to facilitate State development and implementation of robust testing plans and rapid response programs. It sets forth the partnership between Federal, State, local, and tribal governments, along with the private sector and professional associations, all of which will play important roles in meeting the Nation's testing needs.

PUBLIC HEALTH



PHTA distributed a letter to all state and local health officials offering guidance to ensuring safety in public pools during COVID-19.

[Read the letter.](#)

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.

2111 Eisenhower Ave | Ste. 500
Alexandria, VA 22314
703.838.0083 | memberservices@phta.org

[Unsubscribe](#)

View this email [in your browser](#).

