



**For Immediate Release
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JEFFERSON COUNTY UNIFIED COMMAND CENTER UPDATES FOR MAY 1, 2020

Birmingham, AL – The Jefferson County Unified Command Center (JCUC) and its partner agencies held a press conference at 11:30 am today to discuss the current state of the response to COVID-19. Dr. Mark Wilson, Jefferson County Health Officer, and Jim Coker, Director of Jefferson County Emergency Management Agency serve as the co-leaders of the Unified Command Center.

Jefferson County Department of Health:

While the state had not yet fully met the benchmarks recommended by the White House before lifting Stay at Home orders, the new statewide “Safer at Home Order” order does represent a measured and careful approach.

The main changes from before are:

- Allowances to open retail businesses at 50% of the normal allowable occupancy while following social distancing requirements and sanitation guidelines from the CDC.
- Allowing dental, medical and surgical procedures to proceed, unless the State Health Officer or designee determines that such procedures would unacceptably reduce access to personal protective equipment or PPE. I will be particularly interested in how this affects the demand and supply of PPE: our health department needs PPE to conduct the testing related to contact tracing, and we have a limited supply.

To make sure testing efforts are well-coordinated and guided by data and the best expertise available to us, the formation of a Countywide Testing Collaborative to guide and coordinate COVID-19 testing efforts going forward. This Collaborative will include three groups:

1. A small group of infectious disease, epidemiology and public health experts
2. A group representing various providers of community testing
3. A group of representatives from each of our five County Commission districts. This will ensure that we have some level of community input, assistance in choosing and supporting testing sites, and communication with political leaders and the public about the testing strategy.

Regardless of how fast or slow business activity and other activities increase, EVERYONE needs to continue to do everything they can to protect themselves and others from infection:

- Minimize travel outside the home
- Wear a face covering when around people from other households