



GRAND TRAVERSE COUNTY ADMINISTRATION/BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

400 BOARDMAN AVENUE
TRAVERSE CITY, MI 49684-2577

ADMINISTRATION
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

231/922-4780
231/922-4797

October 5, 2020

Community Leaders,

On Friday, October 2, 2020, the Michigan Supreme Court ruled that "the executive orders issued by the Governor in response to the COVID-19 pandemic lack any basis under Michigan law." The Court indicated that its decision "leaves open many avenues for the Governor and Legislature to work together" to address the challenges posed by the pandemic. Importantly, the Court's order does not affect the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) orders, which require organizations to have many of the same health and safety protocols in place as required by the Governor's Executive Orders.

In light of the recent Court ruling, Grand Traverse County and the Grand Traverse County Health Department have already received a number of questions as to how this will affect any organizational or local community plans and protocols. As we move forward together in this pandemic, organizations and the public will need to understand the impact of the Supreme Court ruling and what is required by the MDHHS orders. We are currently reviewing the existing orders and gaining clarity as to their standing. If necessary, the Health Department will develop next steps to fill any gaps needed to protect public health. We will ensure compliance with the Court ruling and will work with legal advisors as well as State and regional public health partners to develop any local protocols or orders.

The Governor indicated in her recent press release that her office is working on the development of next steps and relayed that many of the safety precautions required under her Executive Orders may be re-issued under other authorities. We are awaiting further direction from the Executive Office of the Governor and the MDHHS. Organizations such as the Michigan Association of Counties and Michigan Association of Local Public Health are also working with their legal counsels and/or other resources to review the ruling and will be advising counties about legal implications for county operations.

In the meantime, from a public health perspective, we stand behind the mitigation measures and safety precautions that are currently in place. They are working to reduce transmission of COVID-19. We have worked hard to get this far together and we encourage everyone to stay the course and continue to protect themselves and each other. The Health Department will continue to focus our public health efforts on testing, investigation, and contact tracing as well as promoting compliance with safety precautions and will share additional information as it becomes available.

At this time, the Grand Traverse County Health Department stresses the importance of consistency and keeping core COVID-19 mitigation strategies in place while more specific guidance is developed. At a minimum, these strategies include proper mask use, social distancing, frequent handwashing, and staying home if you are sick.

Grand Traverse County has done a great job in mitigating the spread of COVID-19 through the strategies that have been in place throughout the community and we remain confident our community will continue those efforts and help keep each other safe.

Wendy S. Hirschenberger, MPH,
Health Officer
Grand Traverse County Health Department

Nate Alger
Administrator
Grand Traverse County