

Ohio Public Health Advisory System

Level 4, Purple Public Emergency: Severe Exposure and Spread

Level 4, or Purple, is the highest level of the Ohio Public Health Advisory System. When a county reaches Purple, it means it has met at least six of seven indicators of concern for COVID-19 spread for at least two consecutive weeks. Residents should only leave home for supplies and services.

The Seven Indicators:

These measures are indicators of disease spread in the community; disease severity; community concerns about health and the virus; hospital burden; and capacity to manage a possible surge in critical COVID-19 patients.

1. New cases per capita: There have been more than 50 cases per 100,000 residents over the past two weeks.
2. Sustained increase in new cases: At some time during the past three weeks, there were at least five consecutive days when the number of cases (by onset date) increased.
3. Proportion of cases not in a congregate setting: The proportion of cases among people who are not residents of long-term care facilities, group homes, jails or prisons has been more than 50% in at least one of the past three weeks.
4. Sustained increase in emergency department (ED) visits for COVID-19-like illness: At some time during the past three weeks, there were at least five consecutive days when the number of COVID-19 ED visits increased.
5. Sustained increase in outpatient visits for COVID-like illness: At some time during the past three weeks, there were at least five consecutive days when the number of people making COVID-19 healthcare visits increased.
6. Sustained increase in new COVID-19 hospital admissions: At some time during the past three weeks, there were at least five consecutive days when COVID-19 hospital admissions increased.
7. Intensive care unit (ICU):* The percentage of occupied ICU beds in the region was above 80% for at least three days during the past week, AND more than 20% of ICU beds were being used for COVID-19 patients for at least three days during the past week.

*Meeting this indicator has been rare because hospitals have been able to make accommodations to meet increased numbers of COVID-19 ICU patients. However, if COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations continue to increase, staffing and resources may not be able to keep up, putting the care of all hospitalized patients (COVID-19 and non-COVID-19) in jeopardy.