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April 27, 2021

Good Afternoon,

Governor Baker has announced several updates to the Commonwealth's reopening timeline, including many protocols related specifically to the travel, tourism, and hospitality sector. Please note that these updates are for the state, but Boston may well delay its timeline, as the City has demonstrated in the past.

Effective April 30, the mandate for face coverings will be eased in outdoor settings. While face coverings will still be required indoors, they will only be required outdoors if people cannot be socially distanced. Please note that for venues and in public spaces, regardless of indoor/outdoor, people will be required to wear masks when not eating or drinking.

Effective May 10, MA will re-open some businesses in the Phase 4, Step 2 category, including amusement parks at 50% capacity. Sports stadiums and arenas will be permitted to increase capacity from 12% to 25%. For those large venue operators who have already submitted a re-opening plan to DPH, please note that you will NOT have to submit a new plan. Also effective May 10, restaurants and other venues that host live music will again be able to have singing indoors, per the requirements specified in the Theater and Performance Venue guidance, which the Commonwealth is currently updating.

We will get our next increase in gathering sizes effective May 29. At public and private settings, per public health data, gathering limits will increase to 200 indoors and 250 outdoors. Additional Phase 4, Step 2 industries can begin operations on May 29 as well, including festivals at 50% of 2019 capacity provided that the event organizer submits a safety plan to the Local Board of Health.

On May 29 bars, beer gardens, breweries, wineries and distilleries will be permitted to re-open without the requirement that food service accompany alcohol sales. This will be for seated service only – still with a 90-minute limit – and no dance floors. Restaurants will be able to increase table sizes to 10 people and will be permitted to serve alcohol regardless of food sales.

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Effective August 1 all industry restrictions will be lifted with 100% capacity allowed. Gathering limits will expire and sector-specific protocols will be rescinded. Masks will still be mandatory indoors.

The full update can be seen [here on the state's site](#). While we are pleased to see a definitive timeline emerge, it falls far short of what our neighboring states have committed to for a full reopening (see attachment). Throughout this pandemic, the Bureau has categorically and unequivocally supported our elected leaders and public officials in their commitment keep us all safe. Our support remains absolute. However, as we approach a full reopening, and see our entire region relaxing rules months before we do, it becomes difficult to assure our members that their concerns, including the reality of how they operate and the economic metrics that underpin their livelihood, are being fully considered by public officials.

The notion of "relaxing" restrictions is not tied to relaxing vigilance within our industry. In fact, it is exactly the opposite. We operate in an industry with some of the most stringent guidelines. Given the dedication our hotels, restaurants, venues, tour operators and others have to public health protocols, it is ironic that these businesses are among the safest but cannot get the greenlight they need to re-open. The Bureau continues to underscore this point with public officials and continues to seek out answers as to why the prevailing caution, so predicated on science and metrics, does not correlate to how safely our industry is currently reopening.

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