

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE DISTRICT OF MARYLAND**

IN RE:

COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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MISC. NO. 00-308

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**STANDING ORDER 2022-05**

Since March 16, 2020, this Court's operations have been limited as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. In the intervening months, the Court has issued several orders restricting who may enter the Courthouses, the manner in which civil and criminal proceedings will be conducted, whether petit and grand juries may safely assemble, and many other areas of court operations. However, in light of the progression into a more endemic phase of this crisis and with the agreement of the Court's consulting epidemiologist, the Court finds it appropriate to lift the remaining limitations on its operations and enter Phase Four of the recovery process.

At the beginning of the pandemic, the Court adopted a phased recovery process to guide its return to full and unrestricted operations based on (1) the data regarding the COVID-19 pandemic, and its impact on Maryland citizens; and (2) the guidance of local public health officials. In the State of Maryland and across the country, virus metrics have stabilized. Relevant metrics such as hospitalizations, test positive rate, and reported new cases have remained consistent for several months, a significant change from the wave pattern experienced during the first years of the pandemic. Moreover, the virus's severity has decreased as milder variants have emerged and the population has gained some level of immunity from vaccinations and prior infection. State and local officials have also now resumed normal operations. The Governor of Maryland ended the COVID-19 state of emergency in February 2022, and the Maryland State Judiciary resumed full and complete operations on April 3, 2022. Additionally,


the Court's consulting epidemiologist, who has guided the Court throughout the pandemic, now advises that a return to nearly unrestricted operations is appropriate. Accordingly, it is hereby

ORDERED by the United States District Court for the District of Maryland that, effective January 3, 2023, the Court shall enter Phase Four of its Recovery Plan and return to full and (nearly) unrestricted operations; and it is further

ORDERED that the wearing of masks shall remain mandatory for prospective jurors while participating in voir dire in the courtroom. In addition, a presiding judge in any proceeding may require that all or some of the court participants, jurors, and/or spectators be required to wear a mask while in the courtroom. Individuals without a mask appearing for a court proceeding where a mask is required will be provided one by the Court. All persons are encouraged to wear a mask while congregating in any public areas of the Courthouses.

ORDERED that Standing Order 2022-03, Amended Standing Order 2021-16, Standing Order 2021-10, and all prior orders limiting the Court's operations due to the COVID-19 pandemic are RESCINDED.

Date: *December 14, 2022*

  
James K. Bredar, Chief Judge  
United States District Court