LEGISLATIVE UPDATE
We continue to share the most recent news regarding COVID-19, the legislature and the 2020 session. To date, the Governor has issued 46 Executive Orders with many public health orders and agency rules accompanying those executive orders. Strategies360 has been cataloging and tracking those. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you have additional questions. Below please find information on the following topics:

- Safer at Home Executive Order
- County Orders extending Stay-at-Home Orders and delaying Safer at Home Transition
- K12 & Higher Education Executive Orders
- Guidance for Institutions of Higher Education Issued April 28, 2020
- Legislative Joint Budget Committee Operating Norms and Schedule
- Governor’s Council on Economic Stabilization and Growth looking to provide policy and practical solutions during the pandemic
- Colorado and the Western States Pact

State Transitions out of the “Stay at Home Order” to the “Safer at Home” Guidelines
With the Governor's Stay-at-Home Executive Order expiring, he has issued a new Safer at Home Executive Order here. This new order aims to maintain 60-65% physical distancing. The Governor is working to develop best practices and specific guidance for different industries during the Safer-at-Home phase and will have more details in the coming days. Below are some general guidelines for the Safer at Home phase that were released earlier this week. Please keep in mind there are county orders that supersede the Governor’s Safer at Home Order.

- Critical businesses will remain open with strict precautions (social distancing, masks for all employees, more frequent cleanings, etc.) Retail businesses may open for curbside delivery and phased-in public opening with strict precautions.
- Elective medical and dental procedures begin, with strict precautions to ensure adequate personal protective equipment and the ability to meet critical care needs.
- Personal services (salons, dog grooming, limited personal training, etc.) will open with strict precautions. (starting May 1st)
- Telecommuting continues for offices. Starting on May 4, up to 50% of staff can work in person (with social distancing in place).
- Nightclubs, gyms and spas will remain closed.
- No group gatherings of more than 10 people.
- K-12 schools and higher ed institutions will remain online for the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year.
- Vulnerable populations and older adults must stay home unless absolutely necessary.
- Recreation and non-essential travel is limited to a 10-mile radius from a person’s residence.

For more detailed information, please read the Governor's press release from April 26, 2020, that includes the timeline for the Safer-at-Home phase and options for local governments.

County Orders extending Stay-at-Home Orders and delaying Safer at Home Transition
Counties are allowed to have more strict guidelines in place, but cannot have weaker guidelines unless they have applied for and received permission from the CO Department of Public Health and Environment. To date, Eagle County has received permission and Mesa County has applied. Counties who are out of compliance with the statewide order are at risk of losing state funding for COVID-19, the executive order states.
It is important to note that Jefferson, Boulder, Adams, Arapahoe, and Denver counties are extending their stay-at-home orders until May 8th. You can find county by county guidance by clicking on the specific counties above.

In a letter to Governor Polis last week, a consortium of local public health officials recommended that in order to safely relax restrictions on people’s movements and work, Colorado should be sure that every symptomatic person can be tested for COVID-19 within 24 hours and see test results within 12 to 24 hours. It also suggests employers be required to screen employees daily for COVID-19 symptoms and that face masks should be encouraged or mandated for some time.

**K-12 Schools and Institutions of Higher Education Executive Orders**

Last week, the Governor signed an executive order that results in Colorado school students not returning to their classrooms for in-person learning for the remainder of the school year. The governor said while there is no guarantee that classroom learning will resume in the fall, school districts are preparing for a return of students in August. A firm decision on whether or not in-person instruction can proceed in the fall will be made later on in the coming months when district officials and the state can work out guidelines on how to proceed with traditional in-classroom instruction. In conversations with superintendents and higher education presidents, scenarios with online learning continuing through the fall semester have been entertained.

In addition, Public Health Order 20-28, which accompanies the Safer at Home Executive Order outlines guidelines for postsecondary institutions. Programs and courses at postsecondary institutions that cannot be conducted remotely, generally due to equipment requirements, may be conducted through limited in-person instruction. Institutions that wish to resume providing in-person instruction must inform the Colorado Department of Higher Education and ensure that Social Distancing Requirements are strictly followed. Additionally, students are allowed to opt out of the in-person instruction; such students will be treated no differently than students in all other courses that have ceased in-person instruction due to the COVID-19 situation.

Postsecondary institutions, including private and public colleges and universities, for the purpose of facilitating distance learning, providing in person classroom or laboratory education for less than 10 students per classroom or lab in medical training fields only, or performing essential functions, provided that Social Distancing Requirements are observed, such as security, medical and mental health services, housing, food services, and critical research.

**Guidance for Institutions of Higher Education Issued April 28, 2020**

The Colorado Department of Higher Education issued guidance that provides further information to Colorado postsecondary institutions on implementing the Governor’s Safer at Home executive Order and the accompanying Public Health Order 20-28. The guidance for higher education institutions, issued on April 28, replaces updated guidance that the Colorado Department of Higher Education issued on April 22, 2020. This guidance is valid for 30 days or until modified or extended. With the Safer at Home executive order, institutions are permitted to offer face-to-face instruction in limited cases after informing the Colorado Department of Higher Education.

**Legislative and Joint Budget Committee Schedule**

The Joint Budget Committee released updated staff budget setting documents for departments on April 27. Our team is looking into these documents and continue to monitor the budget situation and will pass along additional information as it relates to you. The JBC will begin meeting on May 4th. Committee work will be streamed via audio and live video will also be available. Mini-forecasts for the period of March 12-May 1 will be presented by Legislative Council and the Office of State Planning and Budgeting. The JBC will then continue meeting to finalize the budget for introduction on May 18th in the House.
The legislature plans to return in person meet the week of May 18th in a slightly different format with the priorities of passing the School Finance Act, the Long Bill, and key bills deemed essential by both chambers’ leadership. Committee hearings will take place in the two largest committee hearing rooms with seating using appropriate social distancing and a limit on attendees allowed in the room. The general public is rumored to be allowed to enter the building through a single entrance and will have to undergo temperature checks and be wearing masks and gloves at all times. The chamber galleries and lobbies will be locked off from the public as members will be spaced out in the galleries and chambers for floor debate and voting. Planning continues to take place and more information will be provided on how the General Assembly plans to handle public testimony.

**Governor’s Council on Economic Stabilization and Growth**

Our team is monitoring the Governor’s Council on Economic Stabilization and Growth, formed by the Governor in March to explore the full scope of economic impacts of COVID-19 in our state and make recommendations to mitigate the uncertainty faced by workers, employers, their families and communities. The Council has 8 subcommittees: Arts and Culture Committee; Energy Committee; Entrepreneurs, Local, Rural, Women & Minority Led Business and Nonprofits Committee; Financial Services Committee; Infrastructure Committee; Labor, Employment, and Education Committee; Outdoor Recreation Committee; and Tourism Committee. The Council’s webpage offers the public an opportunity to voice their concerns or suggest ideas here. The subcommittees started meeting publicly this week, but work has been happening prior to this week behind the scenes.

**Colorado Joins the Western States Pact**

Governor Polis announced that Colorado will be joining California, Nevada, Oregon and Washington in the Western States Pact, a working group of Western state governors with a shared vision for modifying stay at home and fighting COVID-19. The Governors have pledged that health outcomes and science, and not politics, will guide their decisions regarding COVID-19.