



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

May 15, 2020

**CONTACT:** Gillum Ferguson  
[gillum.ferguson@tn.gov](mailto:gillum.ferguson@tn.gov)  
615-253-4516

### **Economic Recovery Group to Lift Capacity Restrictions on Restaurants and Retail, Allow for Large Attractions to Open**

**Nashville, Tenn.** – As Tennessee continues to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, the state’s Economic Recovery Group announced today it will lift capacity restrictions on restaurants and retail to instead focus on social distancing best practices effective May 22 and issue guidelines to facilitate the safe reopening of larger, non-contact attractions on or after May 22. New [Tennessee Pledge](#) guidelines will be released early next week. Six counties – Shelby, Madison, Davidson, Hamilton, Knox and Sullivan – may continue to follow individual, county-specific reopening plans created in consultation with State and local health departments.

“Tennesseans have worked incredibly hard to do their part and help slow the spread of COVID-19 so that our state can begin to reopen. Thanks to their continued efforts, we’re able to allow restaurants and retail businesses to operate at greater capacity and large attractions to open in a safe and thoughtful way,” said Governor Bill Lee. “Our state continues to see downward trends in case growth and meets the White House criteria for a phased reopening. This progress has been hard-won, and we can build upon it by reopening while also maintaining common-sense safety measures like mask-wearing and good hygiene. By taking the Tennessee Pledge, our businesses can reopen in a way that protects the health of their customers and employees, and protects the livelihoods of hard-working Tennesseans.”

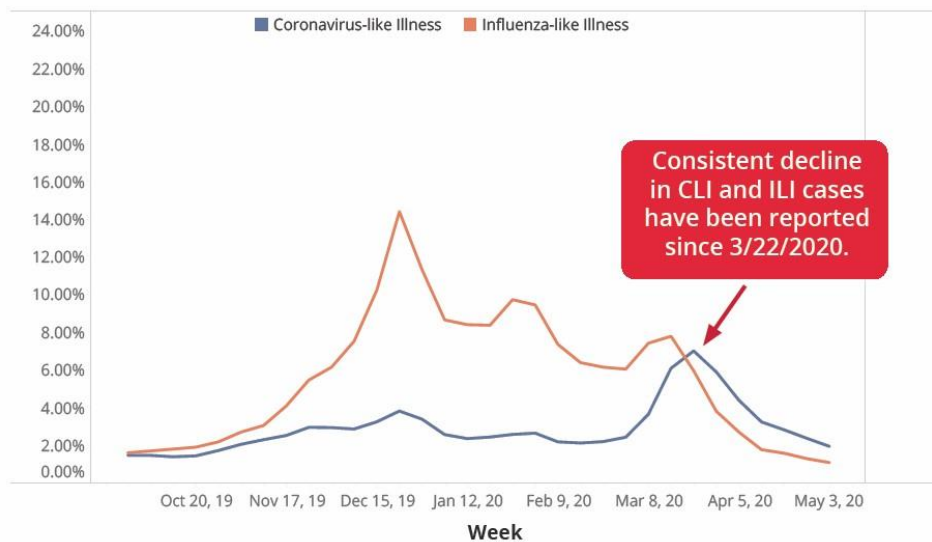
The new Large Attractions guidance applies to those businesses that can effectively practice social distancing with strong measures to protect both employees and customers, including racetracks, amusement parks, waterparks, theaters and dinner

theaters, auditoriums, large museums and more. Restrictions on social gatherings of more than 10 people remain in place for the time being. Updates to Restaurant Guidance will include a lift on capacity restrictions, allowing for increased service as long as social distancing guidelines are adhered to, including 6 feet between tables.

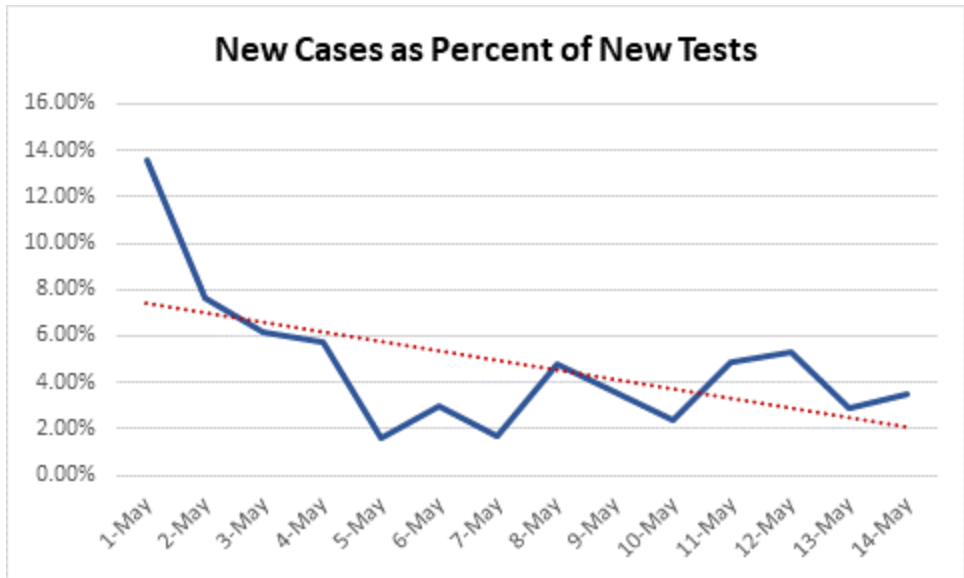
The updated guidelines come as Tennessee continues to meet the White House state gating criteria for phased reopening. The gating criteria include:

- Symptoms
  - Downward trajectory of influenza-like illnesses (ILI) reported within a 14-day period; AND
  - Downward trajectory of COVID-like syndromic (CLI) cases reported within a 14-day period
- Cases
  - Downward trajectory of documented cases within a 14-day period; OR
  - Downward trajectory of positive tests as a percent of total tests within a 14-day period (flat or increasing volume of tests)
- Hospitals
  - Treat all patients without crisis care; AND
  - Robust testing program in place for at-risk healthcare workers, including emerging antibody testing

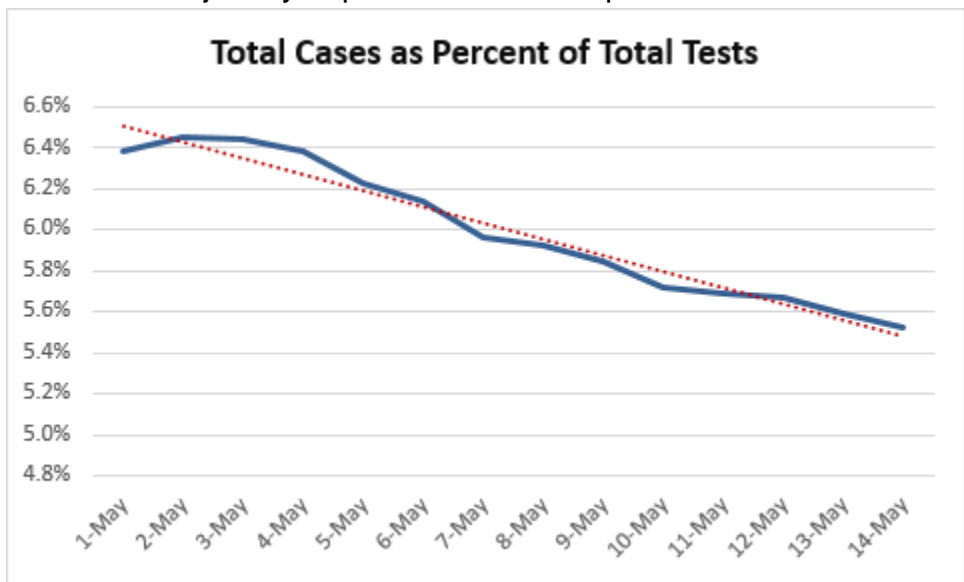
### Downward trajectory of ILI and CLI cases



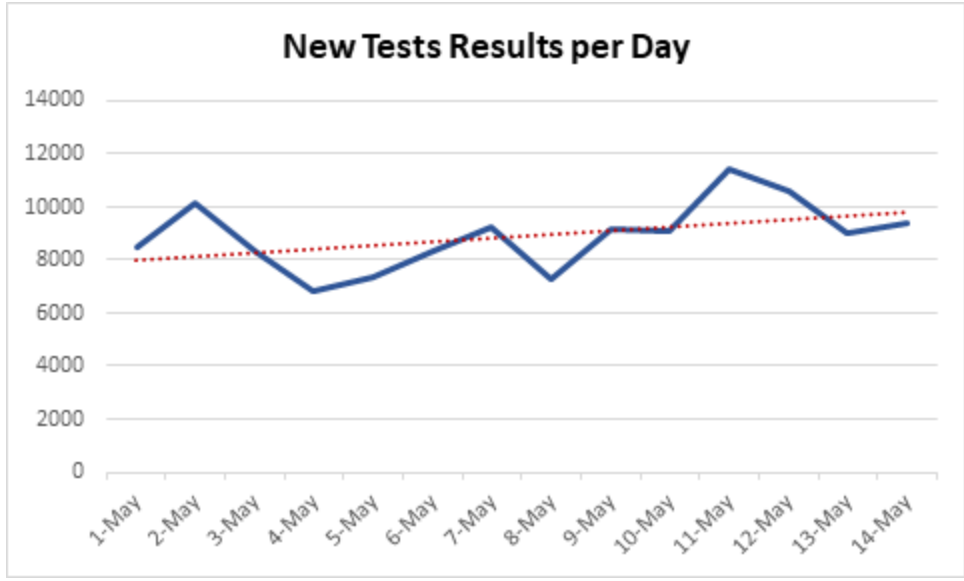
### Downward trajectory of documented cases within a 14-day period



Downward trajectory of positive tests as a percent of total tests within a 14-day period



Flat or increasing volume of tests



Hospital capacity remains sufficient to meet the needs of patients, while the state continues to meet the goal of testing 2 percent of the population per month.

The Economic Recovery Group (ERG), composed of 30 leaders from the public and private sector, is crafting guidance to assist businesses in a safe reopening. The industry representatives participating in the ERG collectively represent over 140,000 Tennessee businesses that employ over 2.5M Tennesseans. More information about ERG is available [here](#).

###