



President's Corner
May 2020

Since the onset of the Coronavirus pandemic in Illinois, Governor Pritzker has taken aggressive action to minimize the impact of COVID-19 in our state, and the Village of Western Springs is following the Governor's Executive Orders and public health guidelines. Thanks to your early adoption of critical mitigation strategies, the occurrence of positive cases in Western Springs remains relatively low.

Governor Pritzker recently announced a plan to re-open the state. This five-phased plan, called '[Restore Illinois](#)', is guided by health metrics and will gradually relax current restrictions, with distinct business, education, and recreation activities characterizing each phase. This initial framework will likely be updated as research and science develop, and as the potential for treatments or vaccines is established. The plan is based upon regional healthcare availability, and recognizes the distinct impact COVID-19 has had on different regions of our state, as well as variations in hospital capacity.

The Governor's 'Restore Illinois' plan divides Illinois into four regions. Our area is the Northeast Region, which includes all of Cook County and the surrounding counties of DuPage, Will, Kane, Lake, McHenry, Kankakee, Kendall, and Grundy. It's still too early to say with certainty how the re-opening will play out. According to the plan, each region can move through the five phases independently of the other regions. Currently, all regions are in Phase 2, identified as 'Flattening'. To move to Phase 3, 'Recovery', our region must meet several health metrics that show the rate of infection, number of hospital admissions, and number of ICU patients are stable or declining. The earliest any region can move into Phase 3 is at the end of May, and contingent upon the region meeting the above criteria.

In Phase 3, manufacturing, offices, retail, barbershops, and salons can open with capacity limits and while exercising safety precautions. Gatherings are still limited to a maximum of 10 people. It's not until Phase 4, 'Revitalization', when we can expect a return to relative normalcy, but still with some restrictions. In Phase 4, fitness clubs, retail shops, bars, restaurants, and theaters can open with capacity limits and under certain safety precautions. Gatherings of 50 people or fewer will be allowed.

A region can move into Phase 5, 'Illinois Restored', only when testing, contact tracing, and treatment are widely available. Here, healthcare capacity is no longer a concern because

a vaccine is developed, a treatment option is readily available, or there are no new cases over a sustained period. In this phase all sectors of the economy are reopened, schools and recreation resume normal operations, and there is no limit on gatherings.

This plan is subject to change as it rolls out, and I fully expect it to change. But for now, the guidelines require cancellation of many of our summertime events and activities. Monthly Styrofoam collection at the Recreation Center is cancelled until further notice. The Memorial Day Parade, St. John of the Cross Fest, and the Garden Club's annual plant sale have been cancelled. Currently, Recreation Department programs are on hold, but the department is adapting its summer programming to meet the Phase 3 safety guidelines.

WSBA's Gathering on the Green has been postponed until September 12. The opening of the French Market is delayed until the third week in June, pending further guidance. For now, the Village's annual Spring Cleanup Day remains scheduled for June 20, but that may still change. On a brighter note, the library is opening on May 18 for curbside service for Thomas Ford library books only. Please check the COVID-19 page on the [Village website](#) for additional resources and updates.

From the beginning, the Governor has said Illinois' response to the pandemic is rooted in data, science, and advice from public health experts. This continues to be the case as we turn our focus to reopening the state in a manner designed to keep our residents as safe as possible. Your adherence to public health guidelines has helped to bend the curve. Please continue to be vigilant by remaining home as much as possible, washing hands, and practicing social distancing. Wear your face covering when in a store or public area where it is difficult to maintain 6 feet of separation. When outdoors, use common sense to keep yourself and others safe.

Please continue to support local restaurants, businesses, neighbors, and friends as we continue to navigate through these challenging times as a community. Together, we will get through this.

Alice Gallagher,
Village President