



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**CONTACT:** Casey Black  
[casey.black@tn.gov](mailto:casey.black@tn.gov)

### **Gov. Lee Pushes Reopening, Focus on Economic Recovery** *Ends Public Health Orders and Local Mask Authority*

**NASHVILLE, Tenn.** – Today, Tennessee Governor Bill Lee announced the end of statewide public health orders and signed Executive Order 80 to address economic and regulatory functions. EO 80 also ends the local authority to issue mask requirements in the 89 counties directed by the state health department.

“COVID-19 is now a managed public health issue in Tennessee and no longer a statewide public health emergency,” said Gov. Lee. “As Tennesseans continue to get vaccinated, it’s time to lift remaining local restrictions, focus on economic recovery and get back to business in Tennessee.”

EO 80 contains the following provisions and is effective through May 31, 2021:

#### **Removing Local Mask Authority**

While Tennessee has never had a statewide mask mandate, EO 80 removes the local authority for county mayors in 89 of the state’s 95 counties to require face coverings throughout their jurisdictions.

Gov. Lee has requested counties with independent health departments – Shelby, Madison, Davidson, Hamilton, Knox and Sullivan – that have remaining business restrictions or mask requirements to lift all measures no later than the end of May.

#### **Extending Deregulatory Provisions**

EO 80 extends helpful deregulatory provisions to enable individuals, businesses and other organizations time to adapt their operations in anticipation of ending said provisions.

#### **Maintaining Federal Funding**

EO 80 maintains Tennessee’s access to federal funding, including SNAP benefits and cost reimbursements for the Tennessee National Guard’s testing and vaccination efforts.

In addition to EO 80, the following provisions are effective immediately:

#### **Offering Walk-Up Vaccine Option**

While the COVID-19 vaccine continues to be available to Tennesseans aged 16 and older by appointment, local health departments will now offer a walk-up option.

**Retiring Optional Business Guidance**

The Tennessee Pledge business guidelines issued at the start of COVID-19 have been officially retired.

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