

**COURT OF COMMON PLEAS, GENERAL DIVISION
MUNICIPAL COURT
HAMILTON COUNTY, OHIO**

IN RE: JURY TRIALS UNDER EXIGENT : **M 220002**
CIRCUMSTANCES CREATED BY :
COVID-19 : **JOINT**
: **ADMINISTRATIVE**
: **ORDER**

In response to the evolving public health emergency created by COVID-19, the Hamilton County Court of Common Pleas, and the Hamilton County Municipal Court (the Courts) have implemented measures to mitigate the health risk to the public, Court staff, and all courthouse visitors during the pandemic. As we track this evolving health emergency, the Courts will continue to take necessary measures to comply with public health orders and guidelines.

The Ohio Public Health Advisory System (OPHAS), which was previously utilized by the Courts to receive evidenced-based daily data regarding the incidents of COVID-19 was retired in May of 2021. The Health Collaborative has stepped in to provide the information that the OPHAS previously provided. The Health Collaborative is an evidenced-based collaboration which collects daily data from the CDC; the Ohio Department of Health; as well as all local hospitals and health departments in a 14 county region including Hamilton County. According to the Health Collaborative report dated January 11, 2022,

Case numbers and hospitalizations continue to rise and rise rapidly. Omicron is the dominant variant in our region. All regional counties remain higher than the highest CDC classification for total new cases and for percentage of tests that are positive. Current incidence for the region is 1,134 new cases per 100,000 people per week (up from 910 last week). Incidence is rising across age groups and is highest among those 20-39 years of age. The % of tests coming back positive is now >30% for the region. The number of COVID-19 positive patients in hospital and ICU beds is increasing, at the highest level since the beginning of the pandemic. Hospitals remain quite strained with ~100% of normally staffed hospital and ICU beds in use. Approximately 27% of all patients in hospitals right now have COVID-19. Regional hospitals continue to define their strain using the terms: "critical operations." (daily results can be found on cctst.org/covid19)

On January 11, 2022, the Hamilton County Board of Commissioners declared a State of Emergency in Hamilton County due to the COVID-19 surge.

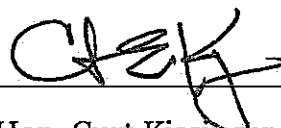
In light of the developments in local conditions, and having consulted with Hamilton County criminal justice stakeholders, the Courts are temporarily pausing jury trials (petit jury service) in order to better-manage this public health emergency, and to provide the best protection for the public, court employees, and all courthouse visitors. The Courts will continue to monitor this fluid situation and will resume jury trials when conditions in Hamilton County improve. Any jury trial currently in progress may continue until conclusion or other order of the judge presiding on the case. Jurors summoned for service on or before February 7, 2022 need not appear on those dates until further Order.

With regard to criminal matters, due to the effect of the public health emergency on the availability of counsel and court staff to be present in the courtroom, the continuances implemented by this Administrative Order, are subject to R.C. 2945.72(H), "Extension of Time for Hearing or Trial". The Courts specifically find the public health interests are paramount and the ends of justice are best served by this Joint Administrative Order. To the extent this Order conflicts with any of the Courts' previous COVID-19 related Joint Administrative Orders, this Joint Administrative Order supersedes.

IT IS SO ORDERED.



Hon. Terry Nestor
Presiding Judge, Court of Common Pleas
Administrative Judge, General Division



Hon. Curt Kissinger
Presiding and Administrative Judge
Hamilton County Municipal Court