



Mississippi State Department of Health  
570 East Woodrow Wilson - Box 1700 - Jackson, MS 39215-1700

## NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE DISTRIBUTION

March 17, 2020

### **MSDH Announces Operations Changes Amid COVID-19 Outbreak**

**JACKSON, Miss.** – The Mississippi State Department of Health (MSDH) announces today that the agency will continue to offer core public health services with some slight changes amid the COVID-19 outbreak.

The Mississippi State Department of Health Public Health Laboratory has been and will continue to operate seven days a week running test samples.

The distribution centers for the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program will remain open but will be limiting visits to two clients at a time inside the warehouse.

County health departments will remain open with current business hours. However, anyone with fever and a cough or difficulty breathing should not come inside the county health departments and should instead call their primary healthcare provider for further instruction. As a reminder, the county health departments do not conduct COVID-19 testing. Physicians, healthcare providers and clinics should test patients according to the guidelines and submit specimens to the MSDH Public Health Laboratory.

The Office of Vital Records location at 222 Marketridge Drive in Ridgeland will be closed to the public but will make other accommodations for vital record certificates. The office will continue to register vital events and process applications for birth, death and marriage certificates. Requests can be made by mail (Mississippi Vital Records, P.O. Box 1700, Jackson, MS 39215), online at [www.HealthyMS.com](http://www.HealthyMS.com), or by calling 601-206-8200.

The Office of Environmental Health will be conducting a reduced number of restaurant inspections, primarily in response to complaints. For now, no food inspections will be made at healthcare facilities.

The Office of Licensure and Certification will make the following accommodations:

- Health Facilities – All survey activities will be suspended except in the case of serious incidents, complaint investigations, and follow-up surveys to serious incidents.
- Childcare Facilities – All childcare facility inspections will be suspended except for Class I complaint investigations involving harm to a child or leaving a child unattended.
- Professional Licensure – Professional Licensure services will remain available and will process renewals and new licenses or registrations. However, tattoo parlor inspections for new and existing businesses will be suspended.
- Background Checks – In-person fingerprint scanning at the LeFleur's Square location will be suspended, but the Criminal History Record Check Division will continue to process background checks.

Follow MSDH by e-mail and social media at [HealthyMS.com/connect](http://HealthyMS.com/connect).

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**CONTACT:** Office of Communications, 601-576-7667

**Note to media:** After hours or during emergencies, call 601-576-7400

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