

COVID-19 EMERGENCY ORDERS ARE ENDING: WHAT THIS MEANS

What is an emergency order?

Under federal and state law, leaders can declare a state of emergency during a crisis. Since 2020, emergency orders both nationally and in Illinois have been in place due to COVID-19 virus (SARS-CoV-2) and the pandemic it caused.

A national public health emergency (PHE) was issued on January 31, 2020 and will now end on May 11, 2023. Illinois' emergency order (called the Gubernatorial Disaster Proclamation) will also end on May 11, 2023.

Does this mean COVID-19 is over?

No. Ending the PHE does not mean COVID-19 is gone or done spreading. There is no "level of disease" that defines a pandemic or emergency.

That said, the U.S. and Illinois may be on our way to a time when we see COVID-19 cases increase only during certain times of the year, like we usually do with flu and other respiratory illnesses. This could and probably will take years to happen. People can and will continue to get sick, be hospitalized, and die from COVID-19, especially those 65 years old and those who are immunocompromised. **The end of an emergency does not mean the end of disruption or suffering due to COVID-19.**

Will COVID-19 at home test kits and testing still be free?

For some. Here is what we understand:

- People with Medicare will continue to be able to be tested at a clinic for free.
- People with private insurance and those with Medicare will no longer be eligible for free at-home testing kits.
- People with Medicaid or CHIP will get free clinic and at home COVID-19 tests and related services until early in 2024.

What does commercialization of COVID-19 vaccines mean?

Commercialization means COVID-19 vaccines are no longer supplied to the public by the U.S. government and instead they are sold privately or directly to healthcare providers/organizations.

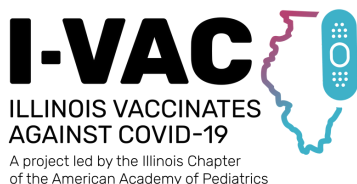
When is commercialization of COVID-19 vaccines happening?

There is no exact date. This will happen when the U.S. government supply of vaccines is depleted and funding to purchase more ends.

How will this impact you?

Vaccines may no longer be free for some people. This will depend on the manufacturers and policies and procedures that are still being developed.

Uninsured and under insured children will get them free through the Vaccines for Children (VFC) program. Uninsured adults or those who have insurance through a federal program may be able to get COVID-19 vaccines for free. Private insurance plans will likely cover the cost of COVID-19 vaccines and/or people covered by these plan may have to pay a small cost, similar to what they have to pay for other vaccines.



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