

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT * ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER
FOR WICOMICO COUNTY *
STATE OF MARYLAND * 2022-02
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**CIRCUIT COURT FOR WICOMICO COUNTY
ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER 2022-02
EXPANDING LOCAL JUDICIARY OPERATIONS
IN LIGHT OF THE COVID-19 EMERGENCY**

WHEREAS, a public health emergency exists based upon the outbreak of the coronavirus, COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, the *Amended Administrative Order on the Progressive Resumption of Full Function of Judiciary Operations Previously Restricted Due to the COVID-19 Emergency*, filed June 3, 2020, provided for five phases of a progressive return to operations; and

WHEREAS, infection rates have now fallen allowing the return to operations in Phase V, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention having issued revised protocols on the wearing of masks on February 25, 2022, and the majority of local jurisdictions having emerged or emerging from mandatory health mandates related to the surge in COVID-19 infections due to the Omicron variant; and

WHEREAS, Joseph M. Getty, Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals and administrative head of the Judicial Branch of Maryland, issued the *Fifth Amended Administrative Order Expanding Statewide Judiciary Operations in Light of the COVID-19 Emergency* on March 1, 2022, effective March 7, 2022, which permits the resumption of jury trials and the cessation of many emergency health measures undertaken during the COVID-19 Emergency,

NOW, THEREFORE, I, S. James Sarbanes, Administrative Judge of the First Judicial

Circuit of Maryland and of the Circuit Court for Wicomico County do hereby order this 3rd day of March, 2022, effective March 7, 2022, as follows:

- (a) Effective March 7, 2022, jury trials shall resume with jury selection to take place at the Circuit Court for Wicomico County; and
- (b) While health screening will be discontinued for entry into the Circuit Court for Wicomico County, individuals meeting the following criteria shall refrain from entering:
 - (1) Any person who has been diagnosed with and remains ill with COVID-19, and is within the applicable quarantine period; or
 - (2) Any person who has not been fully vaccinated and is aware of having been exposed to a person infected with COVID-19 and is within the applicable quarantine period; or
 - (3) Any person who has been advised by a doctor, hospital, or local health department to self-quarantine or ordered to quarantine; and
- (c) Any such persons and their attorneys under Sections (1), (2), and (3) who have scheduled proceedings, events, or services in the Circuit Court for Wicomico County shall file a written motion requesting the postponement of scheduled proceedings; and
- (d) In ruling on such a motion, the presiding judicial officer may:
 - (1) require reasonable proof of such condition before granting a continuance; or
 - (2) where appropriate, require such individual to participate in the scheduled hearing via remote means in lieu of a continuance; and
- (e) Effective March 7, 2022, the wearing of face masks in the Circuit Court for

Wicomico County is voluntary; and

- (f) Except as may be allowed by a Judge or Magistrate on the court's own initiative, or in response to a motion, all hearings, trials, and conferences (including civil and criminal pretrial conferences and status conferences) in all matters, including criminal, civil, family, guardianship and juvenile matters, will be held in-person in the courthouse. Motions for remote participation will be considered by the court on a case-by-case basis; and
- (g) The Clerk's Office will remain open to the public. Appointments will still be required for civil marriage ceremonies. The public may, but is not required to, make appointments for other services; and
- (h) Local *Administrative Order 2022-01 Restricting Access to Court Proceedings in Light of the Omicron Variant of the COVID-19 Emergency* is hereby rescinded; and
- (i) To the extent that this Administrative Order conflicts with extant local administrative orders or policies, this Administrative Order shall prevail; and
- (j) This Administrative Order will be revised as circumstances warrant.



S. James Sarbanes
Administrative Judge
First Judicial Circuit of Maryland
Circuit Court for Wicomico County