

Maine State Executive Order 28 FY 19/20 issue on March 31, 2020 required non-essential businesses to close, school facilities to shut down and transition to online learning, prohibited gatherings of more than 10 people, required people from out of state self-quarantine for 14 days, and strongly encouraged social distancing practices (Mills, 2020).

On April 28, Mills proposed a four stage plan for gradually re-opening the state. Each stage will last one month. This plan will be subject to change should COVID-19 rates of infection rise precipitously. The first stage of that plan goes into effect May 1st, 2020 (State of Maine Office of the Governor, 2020a,b.).

Stage 1 continues to limit gathering to 10 or fewer people. People from out of state are still required to self quarantine for 14 days. Stage 1 also recommends people continue to work from home when possible. Some of the businesses that are now allowed to reopen drive-in theaters, golf courses, barber shops and hair salons, dog groomers, car dealerships and car washes. Churches are free to conduct outside services for congregants who must remain in their cars. Some state parks can re-open. Parks on the coast will remain closed. Stage 1 businesses and services were selected for opening at this time as they are considered to be low risk for transmission of COVID-19 (State of Maine Office of the Governor, 2020 a,b.).

Stage 2 will allow public gatherings of up to 50 people, employees who have been working from home will be able to go back to their work sites. The 14 day quarantine for people coming into the state will remain in effect. Hotels and restaurants will be allowed to reopen, children's day camps will be open for Maine children, gyms, nail salons and all retail stores will be free to open (State of Maine Office of the Governor, 2020 a.b.).

Stage 3 will allow the opening of tattoo parlors and spas. The 14 day quarantine for out of state visitors will be lifted, summer camps will be open to all children. Stage 4 has yet to be determined (State of Maine Office of the Governor, 2020 a.,b.).

We can see in the state a resistance to any policy measures to limit public gatherings and the operation of any privately owned business (Piper, 2020). I believe this resistance to public policy restricting personal behavior highlights the conflict between individualism vs collectivism -- individual autonomy vs state intervention and social control vs. social enhancement.

It's important to recognize the economic concerns that are motivating many Mainers to reject the limitations on commerce, and I think it's important to look at the populations that are at odds with each other at this time. It would be interesting to look at the part socioeconomic status plays. The threat of losing one's livelihood is probably more worrying and more immediate than potentially catching a virus that in all likelihood, will not kill them. I think it's probably easier, though not easy nor without financial hardship, for "white-collar" workers who continue to work from home, have little or no disruption in their income and generally earn a higher wage and have health insurance, to support the stay at home order. If we look at Maslow's hierarchy of needs, having basic needs met (housing and food) is the foundation for emotional and mental health, personal growth. The economic precariousness of working-class people and small business owners highlights the need for institutional policy reforms to secure a living wage and to create programs that support and encourage small businesses. Residually, the allocation of funds for future payments to people and oversight and implementation of programs and money for small businesses would likely help us all feel less afraid and potentially lessen somewhat some of the divisiveness between those who want to lift all restrictions and those who want to wait until there is less risk of an increase in COVID-19 illnesses. Helping individuals get services such as SNAP and unemployment benefits is an area that is immediately relevant to social work

Advocating for workers' rights and fighting for fair housing policies, and health care are some things that social workers might become involved in, that would be taking a long-view institutional approach.

## References:

- Mills J. (2020, March 31). *An order regarding further restrictions on public contact and movement, schools, vehicle travel and retail business operations: Corrected 2*. Executive Order (28 FY 19/20). Retrived from [https://www.maine.gov/governor/mills/sites/maine.gov.governor.mills/files/inline-files/Corrected%202\\_%20An%20Order%20Regarding%20Further%20Restrictions%20on%20Public%20Contact%20and%20Movement%2C%20Schools%2C%20Vehicle%20Travel%20and%20Retail%20Business%20Operations\\_0.pdf](https://www.maine.gov/governor/mills/sites/maine.gov.governor.mills/files/inline-files/Corrected%202_%20An%20Order%20Regarding%20Further%20Restrictions%20on%20Public%20Contact%20and%20Movement%2C%20Schools%2C%20Vehicle%20Travel%20and%20Retail%20Business%20Operations_0.pdf)
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