



March 12, 2021

The Honorable Gretchen Whitmer
State of Michigan
P.O. Box 30013
Lansing, MI 48909

Re: Allow Banquet and Wedding Venues Equal Opportunity to Open Safely

Dear Governor Whitmer:

As COVID-19 cases and positivity rates trend in the right direction, vaccines reach more Michiganders every day, and we are thrilled that other businesses are now able to operate at a higher capacity, we write to urge you to immediately take action to give wedding and banquet venues the same opportunity for a chance to make it to the other side of this pandemic.

The 25-person threshold does not change wedding and banquet venues' survivability. Without more certainty and guidance very soon, it will be impossible to plan weddings and other events. They are quickly losing the spring and summer seasons.

They need immediate guidance soon. Many venues have not hosted any events for 12 months and have already lost bookings into summer. Without the ability to plan around future potential capacity limits for the coming months they face little prospects for surviving 2021. It is extremely disappointing and frustrating for them to see other indoor venues to be able to benefit from the improving metrics, and not be given an equal opportunity to safely reopen.

Wedding and banquet venues have planned for safe operations and have prepared extensive procedures to protect their guests while still providing a memorable experience. They have adapted best practices to meet public health requirements and are prepared to reopen. They just need the opportunity to put these practices into operation.

The need is urgent - business survival and livelihoods are at stake. We ask for more reasonable restrictions based on a capacity formula and other accepted standards similar to other industries.

Almost all other sectors of the economy have been afforded the opportunity to return to work and support themselves, please let wedding and banquet venues do the same.

Thank you for your consideration. Please contact Joshua Lunger at josh@grandrapids.org or 616.901.5168 to discuss further.

CC: Sean Egan
Elizabeth Hertel