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DPHSS Guidance Memo 2021-12

Re: Outdoor Graduation Ceremony Requirements for High Schools and Institutions of Higher Education (IHE)

The following requirements are for High School and Institutions of Higher Education graduation ceremonies other than the “Grad and Go” concept. The requirements put forth by the Department of Public Health and Social Services (DPHSS) is intended to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 while providing the option for high schools and IHEs to have an alternative graduation ceremony.

Other than the “Grad and Go” graduation concept, all graduation ceremonies must adhere to the following requirements:

A. General Requirements and Restrictions

1. Indoor, in-person ceremonies are not authorized.
2. All ceremonies must be held outdoors.
3. Attendees must be limited to school faculty and staff, graduates, and no more than four (4) guests per graduate provided that the outdoor area can accommodate the required physical distancing (See B.2. below).
4. Attendees must pre-register with each school prior to the graduation ceremony in order to be allowed entrance to attend the event.
5. Schools must post signs in highly visible locations (e.g., entrances, in restrooms) that describe how to stop the spread of germs, such as the proper wearing of face mask, socially distancing, and hand washing.
6. Graduates may be allowed on stage when called to accept their diploma and/or take a photograph.
7. Schools must communicate in writing to all faculty, staff, graduates, and guests that if they are feeling ill, have symptoms of COVID-19, or have potentially been exposed to someone with confirmed or suspected COVID-19, they should not attend the graduation rehearsal or graduation event.
8. Students, family members, faculty and staff currently in quarantine or isolation by DPHSS are prohibited to attend the graduation rehearsal or graduation event.
9. All high schools and IHEs who would like to have an outdoor graduation ceremony must develop and submit a detailed COVID-19 mitigation plan to DPHSS at least 21 days prior to the scheduled graduation ceremony. All plans should be sent via email to dphss-deh@dphss.guam.gov. Schools which

anticipate holding graduation ceremonies sooner than 21 days from the date of the issuance of this Guidance are to contact DPHSS Division of Environmental Health immediately.

B. Social Distancing and Other Measures

1. All attendees (graduates, family members/guests, school staff and faculty) must wear face masks at all times.
2. Total number of attendees are limited based on the following requirements:
 - a) Designated outdoor area can accommodate the graduation ceremony;
 - b) All high school graduates are able to be physically distanced from each other by 3 feet of space;
 - c) All IHE graduates are able to be physically distanced from each other by 6 feet of space; and
 - d) Each graduate's group of guests, with no more than 4 persons per graduate, are to be physically distanced between each group by 6 feet.
3. Speakers may remove face mask during their remarks as long as they are at least 6 feet away from other attendees. It is highly recommended for speakers to keep their comments brief to limit the time they are unmasked.
4. Shaking of hands, kissing, or other physical contact between the graduate and any person not of the same household is prohibited.
5. Have a plan in place for staggered entrances and exits and other common places where people congregate in order to reduce the occurrence of bottlenecks. Social distancing measures include:
 - a) High school graduates must enter and exit 3 feet apart from one another in a single line when directed to their seats.
 - b) IHE graduates must enter and exit 6 feet apart from one another in a single line when directed to their seats.
 - c) Tape, chalk, or other markings should be laid on the ground outside of the venue to have a one-way aisle or otherwise direct attendees to follow certain pathways for entering and exiting from the graduation ceremony to ensure social distancing.
 - d) If a line forms outside of the graduation, staff should direct those waiting to maintain social distancing.
6. Staff or attendants must be designated to ensure that only those individuals who pre-registered are allowed entrance to attend the graduation event.
7. Guest seating should comply with the following:
 - a) Six (6) feet physical distancing between each graduate's number of allowable guests based on the designated outdoor area; and
 - b) Affixing or marking with readily identifiable signs the assigned seat for each guest (e.g., numbered section, row, and seat).

C. Cleaning and Disinfection

1. Toilet facilities must be properly equipped with required and necessary supplies of sanitary paper towels, soap, and toilet paper.

2. High-touch areas and toilet facilities should be properly staffed to service, clean, and disinfect prior to, during, and after the event.

For further questions, please contact the Division of Environmental Health at 300-9579 from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM, Monday through Friday, excluding weekends and holidays, or email dphss-deh@dphss.guam.gov.


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