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DPHSS Guidance Memo 2021-14

Re: Graduation Ceremony Requirements

The following requirements are for graduation ceremonies for Schools (K-12) and Institutions of Higher Education (IHE). The requirements put forth by the Department are intended to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 while providing Schools and IHEs an option for a traditional graduation ceremony.

This memorandum supersedes DPHSS Guidance Memorandum 2021-12 in its entirety.

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

A. General Requirements and Restrictions

Traditional in-person graduation ceremonies may be held under the following conditions:

1. Occupancy requirements for graduation ceremonies are provided under the following provisions:
 - a) If held indoors, the total number of persons shall be limited to no more than 50% occupancy load with seating provided the indoor area can maintain the required physical distance (See B.2. below).
 - b) If held outdoors, the total number of persons shall be limited to no more than the outdoor area can maintain with the required physical distance (See B.2. below).
2. Attendees must be limited to school faculty and staff, graduates, and no more than four (4) guests per graduate provided the graduation site can accommodate the decreased occupancy load and physical distancing.
3. Attendees must pre-register with each school prior to the graduation ceremony in order to be allowed entrance to attend the event.
4. 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.
5. Graduates may be allowed on stage when called to accept their diploma and/or take a photograph.

6. 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, that they should not attend the graduation event.
7. Students, family members, faculty and staff currently in quarantine or isolation by DPHSS are prohibited from attending the graduation rehearsal or graduation event.
8. All Schools and IHEs who would like to have an indoor or outdoor graduation ceremony must develop and submit a detailed COVID-19 mitigation plan to DPHSS at least 14 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 14 days from the date of the issuance of this Guidance are to contact DPHSS Division of Environmental Health immediately. Failure to comply will place Schools and IHEs in non-compliance with DPHSS guidance that may result in penalties/fines.

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 indoor or outdoor area can accommodate the graduation ceremony;
 - b) All 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 highly discouraged.
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) 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 maintain social distancing.

- d) If a line forms outside of the graduation event, 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 indoor or 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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