

In the
Indiana Supreme Court



In the Matter of the Petition of the Putnam
County Courts for Administrative Rule 17
Emergency Relief.

Supreme Court Case No.
20S-CB-191

Order Approving Expansion of Operations Plan

By orders issued April 24 and May 13, 2020, this Court ordered trial courts statewide to submit plans for gradually resuming normal operations under limitations appropriate to the 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19) public health emergency. Pursuant to that order, the petitioning court(s) filed an expansion of operations plan (“Plan”) on June 11, 2020.

The Court finds that the Plan was made in coordination with appropriate local authorities and local justice system partners to account for local health conditions, facility readiness, and litigants’ needs; and that the Plan makes reasonable provisions for resuming normal staffing, providing public access to non-confidential proceedings, and resuming jury trials. A copy of the Plan is attached to this order and incorporated by reference.

Being duly advised, and pursuant to Indiana Administrative Rule 17 and this Court’s inherent authority to supervise the administration of all courts of this State, the Court ORDERS as follows:

1. All emergency relief previously granted to the petitioning court(s) under Administrative Rule 17 is deemed to expire as of the effective date of this order, except as provided by this Court’s “Order Extending Trial Courts’ Emergency Tolling Authority and Setting Expiration of Other Emergency Orders” issued May 29, 2020 in Case No. 20S-CB-123. However, this Court’s May 13, 2020 “Emergency Order Permitting Expanded Remote Hearings” and paragraph 3 of its May 13 “Order Extending Time for Expanding Trial Court Operations” in Case No. 20S-CB-123 (prohibiting jury trials before July 1 without prior approval of this Court) remain in full force and effect.
2. The Plan is approved, and the petitioning court(s) shall comply with its terms through its stated duration, subject to further order of this Court.

Done at Indianapolis, Indiana, on 6/12/2020 , **effective June 11, 2020.**

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Loretta H. Rush".

Loretta H. Rush
Chief Justice of Indiana

**PUTNAM CIRCUIT AND SUPERIOR COURTS
GREENCASTLE, INDIANA**

**IN RE: The Matter of Requesting
Relief Under Indiana Administrative Rule 17**

Cause No. 20S-CB-191

PUTNAM COUNTY TRANSITION PLAN FOR COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The Courts of Putnam County provide the following transition plan for the Covid-19 Pandemic:

- 1. Administrative Rule 17 Components:**
 - A. The following portions of the courts' approved Administrative Rule petition should be allowed to expire on May 30, 2020: tolling of time limits, including time limits for juvenile proceedings, public health, all other civil and criminal matters. Speedy trial time limits shall begin July 1, 2020.
 - B. The prohibition on issuing new writs of attachment, civil bench warrants, or body attachments, and staying such any such writs or warrants not yet served shall be allowed to expire on May 30, 2020.
 - C. The authority for continuing jury trials should be extended to at least July 1, 2020.
 - D. The authority for reviewing county-jail and direct placement community correction sentences of non-violent inmates and juveniles should be extended to at least July 1, 2020.
- 2. Planning:** the courts has shared this plan with the county commissioners, county health department, local sheriff's department, local prosecutor, local department of child services, local Bar association and practitioners and county attorney. In developing this plan, the courts have consulted with the local sheriff's department and attorneys who regularly practice in Putnam County.
- 3. Employment Procedures:** The courts have worked to identify those individuals on each respective staff that would be considered in a high-risk category. Staff members are being asked to work in the office only on days that they have court hearings scheduled. No more than two staff members will be working in the office at one time. All other staff members will be working remotely from home on laptops provided by the courts. PPE has been ordered from a vendor to provide to all staff members and use in disinfecting the office areas and courtrooms. All staff members

have been provided face coverings to wear while in the office and in the courtrooms. All staff members are subject to temperature checks prior to entering the Courthouse. All staff members have been requested to not come to work if they are showing any signs or symptoms of COVID-19 or have been exposed to anyone that may be positive for COVID-19. If a staff member has a possible exposure or is showing signs of COVID-19, the staff member has been advised to self-quarantine for at least 14 days and to get tested for COVID-19 at one of the local testing sites.

The Court will proactively share a mental health resource with its employees. The employees will be advised of bewellindiana.com as a resource.

4. **Courthouse Facility Plan:** PPE has been ordered for each court to deep clean the courtrooms and to clean the courtroom after each hearing. Social distancing requirements will be required throughout the courthouse. The custodial staff of the courthouse is also taking extra steps in cleaning all areas of the courthouse on a regular basis with disinfectant.
5. **Screening Procedures for the Public:** Each person entering the courthouse is subject to a temperature check and questions regarding signs/symptoms of COVID-19. Witnesses are being asked to remain outside the courthouse until such time that they will be needed to testify. All persons, including staff members, are requested to wear face coverings and face coverings have been made available at the courthouse for the public to wear.
6. **Resuming Non-Emergency Hearings:** Parties, attorneys, and witnesses will continue to be allowed to appear remotely. The courts will be limiting the number of cases set each hour in an attempt to limit the number of individuals entering the courthouse and the courtrooms at one time. Parties and witnesses that are incarcerated will continue to appear remotely. Individuals that are not parties will not be allowed into the courtroom. Witnesses will wait outside the courthouse until such time they are needed to testify and they will then be able to enter the courtroom.

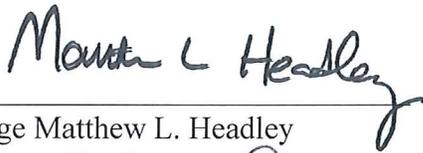
The Court will provide public access to hearings and trials by streaming the hearings and trials through the Indiana Office of Court Technology website platform.

7. **Jury Trials:** Jury trials will resume beginning July 1, 2020. All jury trials will be held in the larger courtroom (Superior Court). Criminal jury trials will be prioritized over civil jury trials. The jurors will be placed in the galley area to allow more distance between individuals. Witnesses will testify from the jury box to allow further social distancing. When a jury pool is brought up for *voire dire*, it will be done in smaller groups which will be seated throughout the courtroom to allow for social distancing to take place. The jury will retire and deliberate in one of the smaller courtrooms to allow more space and social distancing than what would be

allowed in the current jury room. Potential jurors and seated jurors will be screened as all other individuals entering the courthouse. Any potential jurors that would be considered high-risk individuals, showing signs/symptoms of COVID-19 or has possible exposure, would be excused from the jury pool.

8. **Court Supervised Services:** The community corrections, adult probation, and juvenile probation departments have each implemented their own procedures as to how it will be resuming services, providing PPE for its staff members and those using the respective services. All of these offices are contained within the courthouse and all patrons and staff members will be subject to the temperature and COVID-19 screening upon entering the courthouse.

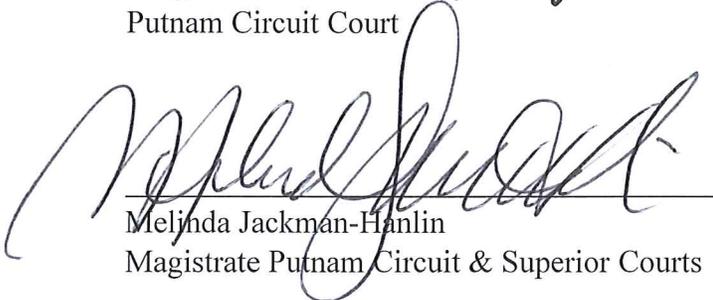
Dated: 6/10/20



Judge Matthew L. Headley
Putnam Circuit Court



Judge Charles D. Bridges
Putnam Superior Court



Melinda Jackman-Hanlin
Magistrate Putnam Circuit & Superior Courts