



# ULSTER COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

239 Golden Hill Lane, Kingston, NY 12401-6441, (845) 340-3150, Fax (845) 334-8337

**PATRICK K. RYAN**

*County Executive*

**CAROL M. SMITH, MD, MPH**

*Commissioner of Health and Mental Health*

May 27, 2020

Dear Ulster County School Superintendents,

Graduating from high school is a major milestone in the life of a young person, and our Ulster County high school seniors deserve to be honored on their graduation day. As with so many other challenges during this pandemic, our school officials will need to be creative. Our Ulster County Department of Health is offering the following guidelines for school administrators to follow as they plan for these important events.

On March 23, 2020 Governor Cuomo issued Executive Order 202.10, which stated "all non-essential gatherings of individuals of any size for any reasons (e.g. worship services, parties, celebrations, or other social events) are canceled or postponed." Under the Governor's Executive Order (EO), the State makes all determinations. The Executive Order was recently modified to allow gatherings up to ten (10) people for any legal purpose. Local governments, including counties, are prohibited from any actions that conflict with the EO. Determinations on when schools will open, or when events will be permitted will be made by the Governor. Since large in-person gatherings are not permitted, mass gathering locations such as Dietz Stadium or other stadiums or facilities, should not be used for graduation activities.

Schools would be permitted to host drive-thru graduation parades/caravans consistent with the allowable Memorial Day activities per the State. Consistent with the State's opening of drive-in theaters, in-car graduation activities in drive-ins and in parking lots or other large open spaces are permitted, so long as social distancing and cleaning/disinfecting measures are in place. All attendees must stay inside of their vehicles (or on their motorcycles) for the duration of the event. A limited number of presenters (up to 10) can facilitate the ceremonies from outside of their vehicles while maintaining social distance. All persons must adhere to proper social distancing and face covering protocols.

Since graduation activities may impact traffic or present other safety concerns, schools should contact the Ulster County Sheriff's Office and local law enforcement to ensure that proper measures are taken to help minimize the impact on the community.

In summary-

Allowable activities include:

- Drive-In vehicle-based ceremony
- Parking lot vehicle-based ceremony

- Vehicle-Based parade/caravan
- Handing diploma's through car windows

In all cases:

- Single or small presenter groups (up to 10) maintaining social distance
- All attendees must remain in (or on their motorcycle) their vehicles throughout the event
- Social distancing and face covering protocols must be adhered to
- Contact the Ulster County Sheriff and local law enforcement for traffic/safety planning

Congratulations to the Class of 2020 and thank you to all in the academic community who have demonstrated resilience in this very challenging time! Ulster County is proud of you!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Carol M. Smith". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a stylized "H" at the end.

Carol M. Smith, M.D., M.P.H., M.S.  
Commissioner of Health and Mental Health