

In re:

ST. LOUIS COUNTY CIRCUIT COURT

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER

WHEREAS the spread of Covid-19 Omicron variant has increased significantly, both within the facilities of the 21st Judicial Circuit as well as within the Metropolitan Saint Louis Community, reaching historic levels during the week of January 10, and 17, 2022, as recognized by the Saint Louis County Department of Health and the Metropolitan Pandemic Task Force, and

WHEREAS the Saint Louis County Department of Health, and the Metropolitan Pandemic Task Force anticipates that the current rate of infection is currently at its peak and it is anticipated that the rate of infection will decrease over the next few weeks, and

WHEREAS, notwithstanding the fact that the Court will remain open, it is imperative that the Court take steps to protect the health and safety of all employees of the Court, all judicial officers, all attorneys, all litigants, all victims, all witnesses and any other individuals or entities who have cases and hearings pending in Court, while also balancing the rights of all said individuals to have their matters heard, and

WHEREAS, the Missouri Supreme Court has directed its courts to “consider strategies to prevent the spread of respiratory germs into, within, and between facilities”; and has left such decision making to the discretion of Presiding Judges who are charged by the Supreme Court with monitoring current Covid-19 conditions in their community, and

WHEREAS, the Court desires to employ additional necessary and reasonable measures to protect the general public, litigants, lawyers, employees and all other individuals from the spread of COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, the Presiding Judge of the Court has the administrative authority over dockets of the Court and the administrative and discretionary authority regarding the manner in which any hearings are conducted in the Court.

WHEREAS, the congregation of jurors, before during and after trial presents a particularly challenging situation, given the current status of Covid-19 spread in the community, and also presents the greatest opportunity for transmission of Covid-19 currently, as the vaccination status of potential jurors is unknown and the proximity of jurors to one another, although generally approved by the St. Louis County Department of Health, has caused increasing anxiety among recent venire panels, which may affect the objectivity of jurors and therefore Due Process of law, and

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED, No Jury trials either Criminal or Civil shall be conducted within the 21st Judicial Circuit of the State of Missouri during the week of January 24, 2022.

SO ORDERED:



Mary Elizabeth Ott
Presiding Judge
January 19, 2022

Division 7