

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT * ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER
FOR WICOMICO COUNTY *
STATE OF MARYLAND * 2022-01
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**CIRCUIT COURT FOR WICOMICO COUNTY
ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER 2022-01
RESTRICTING ACCESS TO COURT PROCEEDINGS IN LIGHT OF THE
OMICRON VARIANT OF THE COVID-19 EMERGENCY**

WHEREAS, a public health emergency exists based upon the outbreak of the coronavirus, COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, commencing on March 17, 2020, by Administrative Order of former Chief Judge Mary Ellen Barbera of the Maryland Court of Appeals, all courts in the Maryland Judiciary were restricted to emergency operations and closed with limited exceptions, pending further Order by the Chief Judge; and

WHEREAS, on May 22, 2020 former Chief Judge Mary Allen Barbera issued the Administrative Order on the Progressive Resumption of Full Function of Judiciary Operations Previously Restricted Due to the COVID-19 Emergency, which delineated a five-phase approach to re- opening Maryland courts (the “Court Reopening Plan”), to progress from emergency operations toward full operational functions, while employing safety measures and monitoring local health conditions to continue to support the health and safety of Maryland residents and Judiciary personnel; and

WHEREAS, on December 27, 2021 Chief Judge Joseph M. Getty issued an Interim Administrative Order Restricting Statewide Judiciary Operations in Light of the Omicron Variant of the COVID-19 Emergency, and the Extension of Interim Administrative Order of

December 27, 2021 Restricting Statewide Judiciary Operations in Light of the Omicron Variant of the COVID-19 Emergency dated January 14, 2022 which returned statewide operations to Phase III of the Court Reopening Plan; and

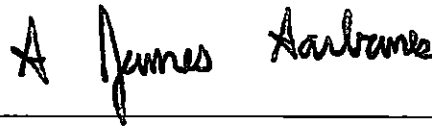
WHEREAS, consistent with guidance issued by the Centers for Disease Control, the Maryland Department of Health, and local health agencies, the current public health emergency will continue through this phased reopening, so measures must be taken to mitigate the potential for exposure for individuals visiting the court and for judicial personnel;

NOW THEREFORE, I, S. James Sarbanes, Administrative Judge of the First Judicial Circuit of Maryland, do hereby order this 14th Day of January, 2022, effective January 17, 2022, as follows:

- (a) Due to the emergence of the highly contagious Omicron variant, and consistent with the Interim Administrative Order Restricting Statewide Judiciary Operations in Light of the Omicron Variant of the COVID-19 Emergency, access to proceedings in the Circuit Court for Wicomico County shall be restricted to named parties and their attorneys, if represented, Additionally:
 - (1) Parties and their attorneys, if represented, shall file with the Court prior to the hearing date a list of witnesses to be approved for entry,
 - (2) In the case of juvenile respondents one (1) parent or guardian will be permitted to enter for the duration of the proceeding,
 - (3) Parties and their attorneys, if represented, shall file with the Court no later than one day prior to a scheduled proceeding a list of others requesting entry to the courthouse for approval or denial,
 - (4) While awaiting the start of a scheduled proceeding, parties will remain outside

of the courtroom once the posted capacity of the courtroom is reached and will maintain safe social distance and remain masked at all times,

- (5) All parties, attorneys, and witnesses will exit the Circuit Court for Wicomico County promptly following the conclusion of the scheduled proceeding,
 - (6) The Clerk's Office shall remain open to the public, but access will be limited to those with business with the Court.
- (b) All extant Administrative Orders on the COVID - 19 Emergency shall remain in effect, and
- (c) This Administrative Order will be revised as circumstances warrant.



S. James Sarbanes
Administrative Judge
First Judicial Circuit of Maryland
Circuit Court for Wicomico County