

MAR 25 2022

TAMMY H. DOWNS, CLERK

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF ARKANSAS

DEP CLERK

IN RE: COURT OPERATIONS DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

**ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER TWENTY-TWO**

We're in a lull, which is most welcome. Infections, hospitalizations, and deaths in Arkansas continue their downward trends.<sup>1</sup> These circumstances are reflected in the CDC's current COVID-19 Community Risk Levels: the virus risk is low in every county in the Eastern District.<sup>2</sup> The percentage of potential jurors who express some COVID-19-related concern about jury service is decreasing. Our Court has held three jury trials, and many hearings, in March without any virus-related difficulties. While omicron's BA.2 subvariant is present in our State, if or when we will have another surge, like the one Europe is experiencing, remains to be seen.

The Court concludes that, at this point, we can relax the mask mandate. Effective 28 March 2022, masks are encouraged but no longer required in all public areas of our courthouses. All other mitigation measures—distancing, extra ventilation, virus-related screening of

<sup>1</sup> [www.healthy.arkansas.gov/programs-services/topics/novel-coronavirus](http://www.healthy.arkansas.gov/programs-services/topics/novel-coronavirus)

<sup>2</sup> [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/covid-by-county.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/covid-by-county.html)

potential jurors, summoning larger pools of potential jurors, staggered starts for jury trials, and remote hearings when practicable—will continue. As the circumstances change, the Court will revisit its protocols and adjust as needed. For example, masking may become prudent once again. We must and will remain vigilant.

All the active and senior United States District Judges and United States Magistrate Judges for the Eastern District of Arkansas concur in this Administrative Order.

So Ordered.

D.P. Marshall Jr.

D.P. Marshall Jr.  
Chief Judge

25 March 2022