



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Dial changes lead to a call to action of county residents

Sterling, Colo. – November 20,2020: Although a number of mitigation plans were initiated in the hopes of reducing the amount of COVID cases, those actions haven't done enough to lower the number of COVID cases and as of 5 p.m.

Friday November 20th, Logan, Morgan and Washington counties will move on the COVID-19 Dial to the newly restructured Level Red. As the cases increase, we have begun to see a stress on our local healthcare systems including hospitals and long term care facilities. The new level will place more restrictions and requirements on our community and businesses in order to try and reduce that stress. Between now and the first of December, we are asking our communities to unite and work to reduce the spread of this devastating virus.

What will the Level Red restrictions mean for these counties? This ultimately means we have no more wiggle room to continue to ignore this virus. The counties' new guidance requires that our restaurants close to indoor dining and provide takeout/curbside service or offer outdoor dining only. Any on-premises selling of alcohol must stop at 8 p.m. Churches need to operate at 25% capacity

or 50 people with the calculator, whichever is less. No personal gatherings should be happening, and indoor events are closed. Outdoor events are at 25% capacity, maximum of 75 people attending only with members of your own household with 6ft distancing between groups. Long-term care facilities are now closed except for compassionate visitation. This change will require the county to implement restrictions across all sectors as described in Section II. F of Public Health Order 20-36, as amended. Our businesses cannot do this alone. Please support our local businesses.

As cases increase, so do hospitalization rates and deaths. It is heartbreaking that we have lost 14 loved ones to COVID-19 across our six counties in just the past two weeks. Hospitals across the state, including those right here in our area, are experiencing significant surges of COVID-19 patients. This is affecting the ability of our facilities to transfer more seriously ill patients to larger front-range hospitals for a higher level of care. This results in extended wait times and often the need to move the patient greater distances to get to a hospital that has the capacity to accept them. The trigger point that will cause counties to move to Level Purple on the COVID-19 Dial will be when hospitals are inundated and cannot handle the caseload, indicating a medical crisis resulting in a full shutdown as we saw in early April.

NCHD is encouraging everyone to work together to reduce the spread of this virus now. We understand that people are social beings and that all of us want to be with our friends and loved ones, but right now we need to do our best to limit

our interactions with just our household members if possible to help slow the spread. The reality is that we do over the Thanksgiving holiday is going to drastically impact how our Christmas will look. More personal interactions will inevitably mean more cases and even greater strains on our hospitals and nursing homes going through December.

We are begging everyone to do their part! Remember to follow the Big 3: wear face coverings, keep your distance and wash your hands. Equally important is really trying to only socialize with your household. Taking these important steps now and maintaining them through the holidays will make things better for all of our communities in the long run.

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