



NEWS RELEASE

Kylee Harless
Public Health Communication Specialist
(970) 522-3741 x1246
kyleeh@nchd.org

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Step Up and Step Up Now

Sterling, Colo. – October 23, 2020:

The rate of COVID-19 cases is increasing at an alarming rate across much of Colorado. There are currently 35 counties outside of their assigned metrics on the CDPHE COVID-19 Dial (<https://covid19.colorado.gov/data/covid-19-dial>). If the upcoming two weeks have the same rate of growth in hospitalizations that occurred the previous two weeks, Colorado will reach the same April-peak level of hospitalizations in early November. The time to make the numbers go down is closing fast and it doesn't leave us much time to step up and slow the spread. In addition, it also does not help that we are beginning to see higher levels before we encounter holidays, flu season, increased indoor activity, and other factors that introduce even more risk than what we are currently experiencing.

The trends we are seeing are showing that clear, swift, and dramatic action is required in order to suppress our current, accelerating rate of transmission. We are imploring you to do the right thing and lead by example, and make the most effective steps now and step up and do it quickly before the stricter restrictions are here and it's too late.

It has been shown that the quicker measures are implemented, the more effective they will be and the greater effect they will have long term. If community members and businesses can step up right now and increase efforts, and work together to get our numbers down we can stop this and hopefully prevent greater levels of restrictions.

The state health department has also amended Public Health Order (PHO) 20-35 to reflect the ability to move counties down one or more levels more quickly as circumstances warrant. The PHO includes the following amendments:

p. 4 Section II.A: clarified that counties are not limited to being moved only one level at a time in the dial and that CDPHE reserves the right to move counties in the dial more quickly than the timeframes outlined as circumstances warrant.

p. 5, 6 and 8 Section II.B, C, and D: reduced the gathering size limit in Level 1 to no more than 10 people, clarified in all 3 levels that gatherings should not exceed more than 2 households, and clarified that the person caps in restaurants, houses of worship, and indoor/outdoor events exclude staff.

p 10 Section III.B: clarified that critical businesses and government functions should follow their sector guidance unless doing so does not allow them to provide the critical need.

p. 21 Section IV.C.15: clarified that elections operations include activities at voter services and polling centers and other locations where elections activities occur, as well as including the act of voting by a voter.

In light of the number of increasing cases and rapidly growing demand on hospitals and health care systems, the state may have to exercise their authority to move our counties to tighter restrictions sooner than discussed in previous mitigation plan consultations.

The time is now to get the numbers down, not tomorrow, not next week, the time is NOW. We are asking for everyone to be mindful of ways that you can help reduce the risk of transmission of the virus. We know that masks work, that social distancing works, and we also know that gatherings, where there are a greater number of people, are some of the primary settings in which this virus spreads. Thoughtfulness on where you choose to go and how often really can make a significant impact on slowing the spread.

We know what to do to keep the virus from spreading; the time to do it is now.

To see how the numbers are doing right now go to our website:
<https://www.nchd.org/covid-dashboard>

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