

May 6, 2020 "Don't Regress, Let's Progress"

12:00 PM

Big Horn County

COVID-19 Update/Response

### **For Immediate Release**

Monday our COVID-19 Big Horn County Incident Management Team met and outlined a framework to move forward in opening up the County, while still protecting our citizens from the spread of COVID. We are expecting to ramp up our testing by testing any people with COVID-19 symptoms.

Yesterday I discussed with Dr. Harrist our state public health lab's commitment to increased testing. Their commitment to test all symptomatic patients and faster turnaround time has made it possible to identify positive cases and conduct follow-up work with local public health to investigate contact tracing and help in COVID containment.

This public health commitment to closely follow and mitigate the spread of the virus has led us to be able to more carefully open businesses to the well, while keeping the sick and their contacts at home.

While we work to ramp up testing to reach our long-term testing target, there are additional steps we can take:

- First, we encourage **anyone with one or more symptoms of COVID-19 to seek** out their providers for **testing**.
- Second, we have a goal to expand testing residents and employees in nursing homes who have not been tested within the next month.
- Third, we encourage those who would like to be tested and are asymptomatic to seek out testing from their health care provider. These tests will be sent to private labs and may have a cost, but many private insurance plans will pay for these. Hopefully testing will soon be expanded by the state to asymptomatic populations in our county.

Please recognize that we are trying to move forward as quickly as possible. I have applied for a variance for outdoor dining at our restaurants with appropriate social distancing, and bars that have outdoor seating at tables, as data clearly shows there is extremely low risk of spread in this activity. However, keep in mind that in in our country and elsewhere caution is still the rule. Pubs in Ireland are closed until August 10<sup>th</sup>. PUBS in IRELAND!

As we begin to consider ways to make our way back to socially distanced church services and as more businesses apply for variances to reopen their doors with increased precautions, we must continue to treat this virus with the same vigilance as before.

In addition to maintaining social distance, washing hands frequently, and sanitizing surfaces at home and between customers, **we strongly encourage our citizens to wear a cloth face covering when in public**, especially in grocery stores and at the new businesses as they open. These simple precautions during phase one will help us protect our neighbors and keep resurgence from imposing new restrictions.

Dr. Harrist has directed me to act in a *"thoughtful and measured"* data driven method specifically tailored to our county.

Governor Gordon has directed, *"Wyoming must prevent a resurgence of COVID-19 to minimize further disruptions to people's lives and to the economy. The process to ease restrictions, recover businesses and resume activities will be driven by health related data." "Our transition must be health-data driven, not date-driven."*

He and his staff have a measured and balanced approach to protecting *"public safety and getting our people back to work."*

We understand everyone's eagerness to get back to normalcy, whatever that new normalcy will look like. We are eager too.

### **Summary of Changes to Statewide Orders:**

The current statewide public health orders have been modified as follows:

♣ **Order #1 continued.** The statewide public health order closing/restricting bars, restaurants, theaters, gymnasiums, child care facilities, K-12 schools, colleges, universities, and trade schools has been continued through May 15, 2020, with the following exceptions:

- Gymnasiums may open in a limited capacity, subject to the provisions outlined in the Order;
- Up to five customers at a time may enter a restaurant to pick up food and drink orders, with appropriate social distancing;
- Childcare centers or home daycares may re-open or continue to operate, with certain restrictions and precautions.

♣ **Order#2 continued.** The statewide public health order forbidding gatherings of ten (10) people or more has been continued through May 15, 2020.

♣ **Order #3 continued.** The Statewide public health order for the temporary closure of nail salons, hair salons, barber shops, massage therapy services, tattoo, body art and piercing shops, and cosmetology, electrology, and esthetic services has been continued through May 15th, but with new parameters to allow for limited re-openings.

- Nail salons, hair salons, barber shops, cosmetology, electrology, and esthetic services, massage therapy services, tattoo, body art, and piercing shops may open in a limited capacity, subject to the provisions outlined in the Order;

All businesses must submit a plan through the county that will detail social distancing, facial coverings and cleaning routines. All three orders will remain in effect through May 15, 2020.

### **Data-Driven Decision Making**

The Department of Health will work with counties to continue tracking priority metrics to inform decisions related to public health orders and the restrictions put in place to slow the spread of COVID-19.

Priority metrics include:

- ♣ **Epidemiological metrics.** These data are collected by the Department's team of epidemiologists and include the number of COVID-19 positive cases, broken out by type of transmission and where the tests were performed (e.g., Wyoming Public Health Lab or private/commercial labs).
- ♣ **Hospital capacity metrics.** These data are reported to the Department by hospitals on a daily basis and include total bed capacity and total COVID-19 admissions, as well as state and county supplies/stockpiles of PPE.

The table below provides more detail on these metrics, including the conditions sought for each. Metrics will be assessed and monitored regularly to inform any actions and/or approval or denial of Countywide Variance Orders or other specific exceptions to the current orders.

Statewide and County Metrics	Desired Condition
Number of positive cases	Reduction over multiple weeks
Percent of cases attributed to community spread	Maintenance or reduction for multiple weeks
Percent of total tests that are positive	Maintenance or reduction for multiple weeks
Total reported COVID-19 hospitalizations	Reduction for multiple weeks
Total reported hospital bed capacity	Maintenance or increase for multiple weeks
Total ICU bed availability	Maintenance or increase for multiple weeks
Daily COVID-19 testing volume	Increased testing volume
Testing capacity	Ability to test symptomatic patients
PPE supplies	Adequate supply of PPE available
County-specific Metrics	Desired Condition
COVID-19 outbreaks in communal settings	Zero current outbreaks (e.g., nursing homes)

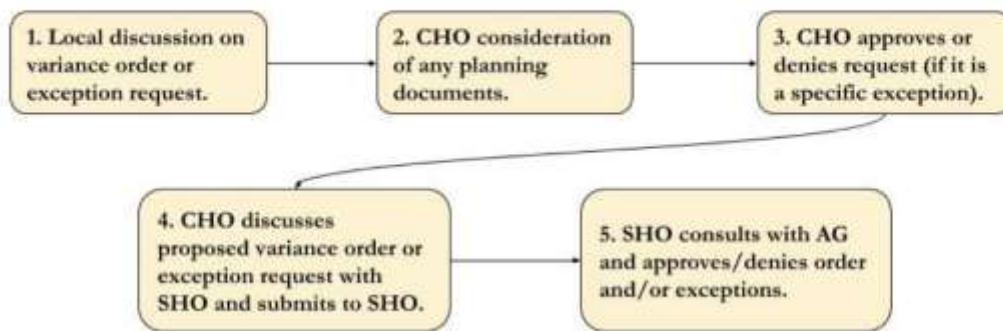
**Planning Documents**

Businesses seeking to have restrictions eased through a specific exception request should submit written plans to their County Health Officer and Incident Management Team for consideration. Planning documents should include, at a minimum:

- ♣ Identification of how appropriate social distancing will be encouraged and enforced;
- ♣ Identification of how patrons will be screened for symptoms of respiratory illness; and,
- ♣ Identification of how appropriate hygiene and sanitation best practices will be followed.

## Process to Request Countywide Variance Orders and/or Exceptions

The following process shall be followed when requesting a countywide order or specific exception:



CHO = County Health Officer | SHO = State Health Officer | AG = Attorney General

Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5
- Local partners, including CHO, county commission, law enforcement, and the county attorney, should discuss any Countywide Variance Order and/or exception being sought.	- Planning documents may need to be developed depending on the content of the variance order and/or any other exceptions.	- CHO approves or denies request, if a specific exception is being sought. If denied, return to Steps 1 and 2, if appropriate.	- CHO discusses proposed variance order or exception request with SHO. Counties draft proposed variance order or exception request in conjunction with the State Health Officer and submits to State Health Officer for approval.	-SHO reviews and consults with AG. The proposed order and/or exception requests are approved or denied. If denied, SHO and CHO may discuss any changes necessary.

Please see the documents on the Big Horn County Website to start planning your request for variance:

<https://www.bighorncountywy.gov/component/edocman/plan-template/viewdocument/622?Itemid=0>

Remember, at this point we are not likely considering variances due to current trajectory of disease. But you should start writing your plan so that we may move quickly when we have the data that COVID is less of a threat in our county. Thank you for helping us get our county back to business.

If you need help finding a health care provider or additional information on COVID call **211**.

Anyone who feels that they may be at risk of harming themselves, or who knows of someone in immediate danger of harming themselves, should **call 911**. Anyone experiencing suicidal thoughts is encouraged to call the U.S. National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at [1-800-273-TALK \(8255\)](tel:1-800-273-TALK) or text **"WYO"** to **741-741** for the Crisis Text Line. Veterans can call: 1 800-273-8255.

Respectfully,  
 David Weston, Fairbanks, MD, FAAFP  
 Big Horn County Health Officer  
 and the entire  
 Big Horn County Incident Management Team

For Sources of Information on COVID-19:

1. Big Horn County Public Health Website:  
<https://www.bighorncountywy.gov>



<https://www.bighorncountywy.gov/departments/public-health>

2. Big Horn County COVID-19 INFORMATION LINE 307-568-4031  
Or Email us @ [covid-19@bighorncountywy.gov](mailto:covid-19@bighorncountywy.gov)
3. Park County Public Health Coronavirus Information Line: 754-1870 or 527-1870  
(Updated regularly). Big Horn County may use this.
4. Up to date announcements from Wyoming Department of Health as they are released Wyoming Department of Health  
Website: <https://health.wyo.gov/publichealth/infectious-disease-epidemiology-unit/disease/novel-coronavirus>.
5. CDC Website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/index.html>
6. Wyoming Department of Health State Orders:  
<https://health.wyo.gov/publichealth/infectious-disease-epidemiology-unit/disease/novel-coronavirus/covid-19-orders-and-guidance/>