

# Big Horn County Public Health Notice

## ***EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY 3/12/2020 11pm***

### **WARNING:**

**THE BIG HORN COUNTY HEALTH OFFICER**  
has issued a **LEVEL 2 HEALTH ALERT**  
**Strongly Advising Against Large Public**  
**Gatherings.**

This should include **ALL SCHOOL**  
**EXTRACURRICULAR EVENTS.**

This does **NOT YET** include **Public School**  
**Attendance.**

### **Concern for Public Health**

The Big Horn County Public Health Officer has been collaborating with Wyoming State and Federal agencies to investigate a potential Coronavirus exposure of a Big Horn County student or group of students from an extracurricular sporting event.

#### **Governor Mark Gordon addressed the media today:**

"Wyoming Homeland Security and Wyoming Department of Health are working to establish a unifying command center to further planning and response efforts. The Wyoming Department of Health and the State Health Officer have determined that at this point the risk of Wyoming residence remains low." The Governor adds, "We have to work together to ensure we...are focusing on public safety and slowing the spread in a proactive manner." The Governor made the following recommendation regarding public gatherings: "With an overabundance of caution, and as a proactive measure to protect the residents of Wyoming, ***I am recommending that we consider carefully whether large community gatherings and events of over 250 persons should take place.*** I encourage anyone planning large events to contact their county health officers and work with their elected officials."<sup>1</sup>

Superintendent Jillian Balow during the press conference commented on the status of Wyoming schools and the possibility of either closures or moving online. "***We are giving guidance to school districts to explore all possibilities.*** The memo that will be

---

<sup>1</sup> Governor Mark Gordon Press Release March 12, 2020

released tomorrow has different scenarios mapped out, and once again those decisions will be made locally."<sup>2</sup>

Citizens are reminded to follow previously outlined health prevention and self-distancing practices. With this guidance I have made the above Level 2 Health Alert.

## COVID-19

*COVID-19 is a family of viruses related to the common cold. It has been declared a global pandemic. The CDC reports that as of March 12, the number of confirmed and presumptive positive COVID-19 cases in the US has exceeded 1600 across 42 states and Washington, D.C., and fatalities rose to 41, with most deaths involving residents in Washington state. Health and government officials continue to call for the end of large gatherings, universities are switching education to online, the Smithsonian announced it will close indefinitely all museums in Washington, D.C. and New York City and Broadway theaters canceled performances through April 12. President Donald Trump announced on Tuesday night in a national TV broadcast that the US would be closed to all flights from Europe—excluding the UK—for 30 days from midnight on Friday 13 March in an attempt to stop the spread of covid-19 to the country.*

*Dr. Nancy Messonnier, the director of the CDC's National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases, said that many Americans will likely become infected by the coronavirus and that older Americans with underlying health conditions should be among the most concerned. Dr. Messonnier said, "As the trajectory of the outbreak continues, many people in the U.S. will at some point in time this year or next be exposed to this virus, and there's a good chance many will become sick." She urged citizens to, "**stick close to home.**"<sup>3</sup>*

## Investigation Summary

As stated above, we have one person who has been tested and results are pending. Several have been recommended to stay at home voluntarily for 14 days following potential travel related exposures. Several events have been cancelled to avoid unnecessary potential close contact exposures.

## Who is most at risk?

Anyone can get an *COVID-19* infection, however, pregnant women, young children, older adults and those with compromised immune systems are most at risk for developing serious complications.

## Symptoms

People infected with *Coronavirus* can have a wide range of symptoms ranging from mild cough to fever, cough and shortness of breath. Some do not get sick at all, though they can still spread the infection to others. Still others become seriously ill and must be hospitalized.

The following symptoms can appear within 2 to 14 days after contact with the virus:

- fever

---

<sup>2</sup> Governor Mark Gordon's Press Release March 12, 2020

<sup>3</sup> The Hill, Americans over 60 should avoid crowds. <https://thehill.com/policy/healthcare/486645-cdc-americans-over-60-should-stock-up-on-supplies-avoid-crowds>

- cough
- shortness of breath

However, some people who are infected with *COVID-19* develop life-threatening symptoms and may die.

## **There is no cure for *COVID-19***

There is no cure for *COVID-19* infections. Treatment includes supportive care:

- rest
- monitoring the illness
- providing respiratory support
- preventing dehydration through proper hydration and nutrition

There is no vaccine or treatment. You should contact your health care provider by telephone if you feel you have symptoms.

## **What can you do?**

The following tips will help you reduce your risk of infection with *COVID-19*:

- Practice good hygiene
- Wash your hands regularly with soap and water and especially after using the bathroom and before eating.
- Be careful with meetings and travel
- Handle food carefully
- Avoid crowding
- Practice safe distancing and stay home
- Please see CDC guidance: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/workplace-school-and-home-guidance.pdf>

## **What the Big Horn County Health Office is doing?**

The Big Horn County Public Health Office in collaboration with Wyoming State and Federal agencies will continue to monitor and investigate any potential cases of *COVID-19* as part of its surveillance activities. Town meetings with Q & A sessions are planned with goal of informing the public of good hygiene and self-distancing practices. We particularly want to encourage all citizens to avoid non-essential large gatherings.



David W. Fairbanks, MD, FAAFP  
Big Horn County Health Officer  
Medical Commissioner, State Emergency Response Commission  
Wyoming Office of Homeland Security

