



COLORADO
Department of Public
Health & Environment

May 21, 2020

Andrea Carlstrom, Director
Chaffee County Public Health
acarlstrom@chaffeecounty.org

RE: Chaffee County Variance Request from portions of **Executive Order D 20 044** and **Public Health Order 20-28**

Dear Ms. Carlstrom:

Thank you for your May 8, 2020 letter to the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) requesting a variance to portions of **Executive Order D 20 044 Safer at Home** and **Public Health Order 20-28 Safer at Home**. I have had an opportunity to review your request and consider the information provided, and determine that the request is approved, with some amendments, as explained further below.

You asked for variances related to restaurants; places of worship; gyms, including a bowling alley; and outdoor recreation, including campgrounds and RV parks, outfitters and hot springs, as outlined in Chaffee County COVID-19 Suppression Plan (Suppression Plan).

The data and information included in your request demonstrates that Chaffee County has had 68 positive cases, with only one case not associated with a long term care facility, and has a disease prevention and response system that includes offering community testing weekly and can test up to 20 people in an hour. Chaffee County Public Health (CCPH) can immediately start an investigation upon an individual being notified of a positive test result, having additional support from a Colorado School of Public Health student and a Vista Corp member to assist, in addition to other community volunteers. CCPH makes use of a contact tracing protocol where testing sites fill out a contact tracing form with the patient while they are being tested. Additionally, Heart of The Rockies Regional Medical Center provides daily updates on its capacity and has been able to build a cache of PPE in the event that cases increase.

The variance application includes a trigger of 14 consecutive days of decreasing COVID-19 cases. We also reached out to CCPH Director Andrea Carlstrom to understand further what amount of cases per week would exceed the agency's ability to investigate all cases promptly, conduct complete contact tracing, and respond to outbreaks, and she indicated that appropriate case thresholds for triggering more restrictions would be more than 20 new cases per week.

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With respect to the the areas you requested a variance from, each is authorized with the amendments described below to the Suppression Plan:

In all settings, the following requirements must be met:

- Customers or patrons should be asked about symptoms before entering or participating in the activity, and service or participation should be declined if they are symptomatic.
- Employees must be screened for symptoms each day before beginning work, and those who are symptomatic must be excluded and required to remain in isolation for 10 days, per CDC guidance.

For restaurants, the following additional requirements apply:

- Indoor seating capacity shall not exceed 30% of seating capacity, not to exceed 50 people, whichever is lower.
- Tables shall be spaced at least 6 feet apart.
- Bars are to remain close, including those that are part of a restaurant.
- Recommend that the sign posted at the door is the CDC sign (also available in Spanish) https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/316129-B-StayHomeFromWork_Poster.pdf

For recreation, with respect to camping, Governor Polis authorized camping effective May 12, 2020. Your proposal allowing campgrounds and RVs parking to open at 50% capacity, with no shared facilities other than restrooms that must be cleaned every 2 hours is reasonable. The following additional requirement applies:

- Prior to opening, outdoor recreation facilities shall submit a plan for reopening demonstrating how they will implement social distancing and other best practice disease control measures to the CCPH for review and approval.

For hot springs, the following additional requirement applies:

- Prior to opening, hot springs shall submit a plan for reopening demonstrating how they will implement social distances and other best practice disease control measures for CCPH for review and approval.

For places of worship, gyms, bowling alleys, and outfitters, all proposed restrictions are approved.

This variance approval is granted based on the facts and circumstances today as you have described them in your request. If the thresholds of either decreasing cases in a moving average of 12 of the last 14 days or 20 or more cases requiring investigation in a week occurs, then this variance is automatically rescinded. Additional CDPHE reserves the right to modify or rescind this variance approval as circumstances warrant. This approval is in effect until the final expiration of PHO 20-28, which currently is set to expire on May 26, 2020 but may be extended.

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I appreciate your thoughtful approach to these challenging issues, and wish you all the best in your continuing efforts to ensure that Chaffee County residents are safe and healthy as we deal with this global pandemic. Chaffee County is a valued partner, and we are available to answer any questions and work with you on these matters. Please give me a call if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jill Hunsaker Ryan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jill Hunsaker Ryan, MPH
Executive Director