



COLORADO
Department of Public
Health & Environment

May 19, 2020

Jobeth Mills, Director
Lincoln County Public Health
326 8th Street
PO Box 125
Hugo, CO 80821

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

Dear Ms. Mills:

Thank you for your application 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 a variance related to Public Gatherings, and in its amended form, your application applies this public gathering request to certain sectors, such as Restaurants and Houses of Worship. Your COVID-19 Suppression Plan addresses particular requirements that you propose as an alternative to the Safer at Home model for each of these areas. The data and information included in your request demonstrates that Lincoln County has had 3 cases of COVID-19 that occurred in March, and the county has the capacity to isolate, trace, and follow cases needed. Additionally, Lincoln County Public Health is working in collaboration with local hospitals and clinics on outbreak response activities, and Lincoln Community Hospital and Care Center has committed to screening and testing patients within its scope of services, and work to facilitate patient transfers as needed for more critical care.

Regarding Lincoln's proposed thresholds for rescinding the alternate restrictions proposed in the variance, we generally agree with the trigger of 5 cases more occurring from a gathering, but also require a trigger based on disease occurring more broadly across the community. Based on additional communication with you, we understand your current resources would not be able to timely keep up with response activities and complete contact tracing to respond to outbreaks if cases exceeded 20 at a given time.

Public Health Order 20-28 authorizes public gatherings of no more than ten (10) individuals, and you have proposed to increase the size to no more than (50) individuals. Any planned public gathering of more than (10) individuals needs to be submitted to the Lincoln County Public

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Health and Environment for review and approval. The plans must include a minimum of 6 feet distancing between participants and require face coverings.

In the amendment to your plan, you also requested that restaurants be allowed to open as well. In addition to the requirements listed in your Plan, the following additional requirements must also be implemented:

- Employees and contracted workers shall be monitored daily for symptoms, and symptomatic employees shall be excluded from the workplace and isolated until they are fever free for 72 hours, other symptoms have improved, and at least 10 days have passed since they became symptomatic.
- Limit the number of customers to 30% of seating capacity
- Require signage on doors telling guests that are experiencing COVID-like symptoms not to enter
- Customers must wear face coverings when entering the restaurant until seated at their tables
- Customers must be asked prior to entering a restaurant whether they have any symptoms of COVID-19, and any customers reporting symptoms must be excluded
- Try to make accommodations for high-risk individuals (e.g. early opening, Senior hour)
- Group parties should be limited to six, ideally to members of the same household
- Place markings on the floor to maintain at least six feet distance in customer lines
- In-room dining shall follow strict physical distancing (6 feet)
- Customers should make reservations online or by phone.
- Every effort should be made to notify customers via text or phone call when their table is ready so there is no waiting in a lobby or outside in line.
- No public sharing of utensils or condiments
- Buffets shall have an employee serving the food, no self-service allowed
- Employees and contracted workers must wear face coverings at all times.
- Implement and maintain barriers for high contact settings (e.g. cashiers) when possible
- Stagger shifts if feasible to decrease employees at the restaurant where possible
- Frequent cleaning and disinfecting of all surfaces and increased frequency of high touch items/areas

This variance approval is granted based on the facts and circumstances today as you have described them in your request. If the County's threshold of 5 or more cases from a particular gathering or more than 20 cases requiring investigation in a week occurs, then this variance is automatically rescinded. Once the county is able to secure sufficient resources to timely investigate the cases, the variance allowances may resume. Additionally, 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 Lincoln County residents are safe and healthy as we deal with this global pandemic. Lincoln 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