

Lincoln County is writing in request to allow provisions of Governor Polis's Executive Order 2020-28 Safer at Home, specifically addressing Section I subsection C. The request our community is asking is to increase a group size of ten people to a group of fifty people or less.

The prevalence for Lincoln County has been low. In a population of approx. 5,000 people there has been only three cases at this current time and the last confirmed case was March 16, 2020. There has not been any new cases in our county since then.

The county has access to one critical access hospital. If there is a surge from allowing the larger group gatherings, the hospital is able to respond within its scope. If a patient would need to be transferred to a higher level of care the hospital has the capacity with AirLife and a critical access transfer unit. There is minimal access to ventilators. If ventilators were needed in excess, the patients would have to be transferred to a higher level of care. The need for transfer would be determined on an individual basis via triage.

There is a capacity to investigate each new case within twenty four hours, provide an isolation order, trace, and quarantine close contact through our LPHA. The hospital and LPHA have come to an agreement to facilitate help when needed, in the event of an outbreak that the LPHA is unable to handle with the current staffing. The ability for testing in our county is readily available. There are multiple clinics, the hospital, and the LPHA to provide any necessary testing.

In regards to protection of PHO 20-28, this is not a request for a "free for all." In the event that a group wants to gather of more than 10 people and no more than 50, there has to be a plan on how the group is planning on practicing and implementing social distancing. The group has to submit to Lincoln County Public Health Director, Jobeth Mills. This plan has to be approved before an event is able to be carried out. Law enforcement has agreed to assist in the enforcement of this variance. If a group has an unapproved event or law enforcement is notified that social distancing is not taking place the law enforcement will issue a warning or cite the group under pursuant to Colo. Rev. Stat. § 25-1.5-101(1)(a) and §25-1.5-102(1)(a)(I).

If the county begins to see an influx of cases that consist of five or more related to the group gathering increase. The county will decrease the group gatherings of ten people or less. Lincoln County residents have been diligent about practicing social distancing. With some of our grocery stores open there are groups of more than ten in the store at any given time. Lincoln County is also an agricultural community where people are working with ten or more people at time. Lincoln County essential residents have already been subjected to groups of 10 or more with just their work/grocery store/gas station contact. A majority of our residents work is classified as "essential workers." This request is being made because Lincoln County residents have already

been showing they can practice and implement social distancing in small groups on a limited bases relating to essential work/essential travel.

Mental health and domestic violence incidents have increased in our county with people being restricted to social interaction and increased stress over the COVID-19 response. Requesting to have groups of fifty or less, under previously stated terms, will aide in the mental health of our community by being able to have some sort of social interaction. By continuing to restrict residents will only have an impact on our residents and children that our county, even our state will not have the capacity to deal with long term.

Thank you for your time,

Jobeth Mills. RN BSN

Director of Lincoln County Public Health