



COLORADO
Department of Public
Health & Environment

Sent via email to mcbocc@mesacounty.us

May 22, 2020

Scott McInnis, Chair
Rose Pugliese, Commissioner
John Justman, Commissioner
Mesa County Board of County Commissioners
P.O. Box 20,000
544 Rood Avenue
Grand Junction, CO 81502-5010

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

Dear Commissioners:

Thank you for your second application to the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) of a variance request 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.

Mesa County has a two week disease incidence rate of 0.65 per 100,000 people. Per the application, Mesa County Public Health has a robust public health system, including disease investigation and surveillance activities, testing, and sufficient hospital capacity to take care of COVID-19 cases.

This variance request essentially expands upon your prior variance request to allow up to 50% capacity in Mesa County critical and noncritical businesses, including houses of worship, with a requirement that operational plans be submitted to Mesa County Public Health. Additionally, you ask for gatherings to expand to 50 people. With the addition of a total cap of no more than 175 people in a confined indoor space at any given time, your variance application for these items is approved. In order to achieve 6 feet distancing the limit is 50% of the posted occupancy code limit ensuring a minimum 28 sq feet per person not to exceed more than 175 people gathered in a confined indoor space at any given time.

Note that for postsecondary institutions, which your variance seeks to permit reopening, you will need to work with the Department of Higher Education to work through their processes for evaluating what portions of higher education may be opened under what circumstances. If you


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deem additional relaxation of restrictions are necessary, you may wish to submit another variance request for that purpose.

This variance approval is granted based on the facts and circumstances today as you have described them in your request. If the county were to exceed a 15% positivity rate or more than 100 cases per 100,000 population in a two week period (approximately 153 cases in two weeks), the variance is automatically rescinded. 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 will be extended in some capacity beyond the current expiration date next week.

I appreciate your thoughtful approach to these challenging issues, and wish you all the best in your continuing efforts to ensure that Mesa County residents are safe and healthy as we deal with this global pandemic. Mesa 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