



COLORADO
Department of Public
Health & Environment

Application for Variance

Name of County: Yuma

Name of Submitter: Andrea Calhoon

Phone Number of Submitter: 970-332-5796

Email of Submitter: aca1hoon@co.yuma.co.us

Yuma County requests a variance from the following restrictions in Executive Order D 2020 044 and/or Public Health Order 20-28.

List the sections of Executive Order D 2020 044 and/or Public Health Order 20-28 that a variance is being sought for:

Reopening of businesses and progressing sizes of social gatherings. Phases 1-2 previously implemented in line with state orders. Tiered Phase 3 to begin after 2500 tests per 100,000 population completed with positive rates < State average and hospital capacity <25% COVID. Tier outline pg 4-5, specific business sector guidance pg 5-10

Summarize alternate restrictions being proposed to replace the above-referenced restrictions and indicate where in the Plan these alternate restrictions are addressed:

Business reopening require local submission and public posting of social distancing plans which include 30% of fire code capacity initially and various social distancing protocols by business type, 6 foot distances and disinfection practices required. Business capacities and social group sizes to be evaluated weekly with increases considered every three weeks by local government and medical offices with target date ranges but no set dates based on positive test result rates, hospital resources, and hospital capacity.

Upload your county COVID-19 Suppression Plan and documentation demonstrating approval by the county commissioners, and confirmation from all impacted local hospitals that they can serve all individuals needing their care. Provide a brief summary of each of the following elements contained in the county COVID-19 Suppression Plan and indicate where in the Plan more information can be found for each element.

1. Prevalence of COVID -19 within the county

Total of 11 cases, recently increased due to the increased availability of testing supplies to local hospitals and establishment of testing site. Limited hospitalizations, no current hospitalizations and hospitals reporting sufficient capacity and resources to respond to plan.

2. Hospital Capacity

Pg 2, Hospitals assisted in development of plan and have sufficient resources and capacity to begin consideration of Phase 3. Interagency communication plan exists between the 2 hospitals to share information and resources, weekly meetings of local task force to assess local status and progression/regression





3. Local containment measures

Pg 4, public health recommendations publicized by all partners and community education regarding social distancing, disinfection, and social interaction limitations

4. Conditions to determine the variance is not providing adequate COVID-19 protection and the triggers for tightening restrictions.

Pg 2, 2500 tests per 100,000 pop completed prior to implementation, positive test result rate < State average to continue to progress, hospital resources and < 25% hospital capacity COVID usage to continue to progress. Weekly task force meetings, progression considered every 3 weeks

 Confirm that the variance requested does not lessen or eliminate the protections for Vulnerable Individuals in the Safer at Home Order and PHO 20-28.

 Confirm that the county will collect and monitor data to evaluate the impacts of the variance. and make such data available upon request by CDPHE.

Additional information relevant to the requested variance

Pg 2 summarizes response to all concerns expressed by CDPHE following the last submission.

By signing below, I attest that I am authorized pursuant to the adoption of the COVID-19 Suppression Plan by the Board of County Commissioners to submit this variance request to CDPHE for consideration.

DocuSigned by:



CEAE2BE49806475

2020-05-15

Signature

Date

May 11, 2020

Northeast Colorado
Board of Health
700 Columbine Street
Sterling, CO 80751

Dear Northeast Colorado Board of Health:

On April 29, 2020 Yuma County initially submitted a local plan variance request to the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment. On May 8, 2020, we received a request for additional information. Please accept this revised plan as our response to that request.

Thank you for recognizing that Yuma County is in a unique position as compared with Colorado counties due to our lower disease rate parameters, proactive development of actionable measures, and rural location. As a County with more favorable data we submit the following plan for your consideration and we seek your support of our plan.

With no sustained surge in the number of cases requiring hospitalization as a result of COVID-19, Yuma County believes as long as our communities continue to make responsible choices, we can, and should, start taking steps to reopen.

We trust and understand as well as respectfully request that Northeast Colorado Health join us in implementing and actively pursuing and advancing the principles in the Yuma County Plan with our community partners and as part of the Northeast Colorado phased approach to reopening. We appreciate the phased approach to mark when various social and economic restrictions can be loosened.

We look forward to continued partnership with our Northeast Colorado Health Department on this solution which promotes economic recovery while assuring appropriate public health measures and progress.

Respectfully,


County Commissioner
District I


County Commissioner
District II


County Commissioner
District III

Wray Community
District Hospital



Yuma District Hospital


Northeast Colorado
Health Department

Initial Plan Response Summary

For convenience, we have provided a summary of response to the requests for additional information provided by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment. Also included are references to the plan outline.

Testing Practices Currently in Place – This information is available in the section entitled “Outbreak Risks in High-Vulnerability Settings are Minimized” with additional comment available in the section entitled “Workplace Preventative Measures are Established.” All healthcare facilities and nursing homes in Yuma County have previously established baseline testing protocols for all staff. Staff continue to be monitored and follow-up testing is occurring as needed. With the recent availability of additional testing kits, Yuma County is now implementing a plan to test asymptomatic government workers, especially in the Yuma County Jail and Yuma County Department of Human Services, as well as employees of critical businesses and large local employers.

Sentinel Surveillance – This information is available in the section entitled “Outbreak Risks in High-Vulnerability Settings are Minimized” with additional comment available in the section entitled “Workplace Preventative Measures are Established.” All healthcare facilities and nursing homes in Yuma County have previously established baseline testing protocols for all staff. Staff continue to be monitored and follow-up testing is occurring as needed. With the recent availability of additional testing kits, Yuma County is now implementing a plan to test asymptomatic government workers, especially in the Yuma County Jail and Yuma County Department of Human Services, as well as employees of critical businesses and large local employers.

Restaurant Employee Screenings – This information is available in the section entitled “Specific Information by Sector,” subsection “Restaurants” and requires the operational plan which is to be posted publicly and submitted to the local governing body, to include employee health screenings, preventative measures, and exclusion from work if ill.

Thresholds for Restrictions – Yuma County is considering two major factors as triggering an expansion or restriction of local policy. Firstly, the two local hospitals have identified a threshold of 25% capacity as a sustainable model for successful treatment of COVID-19 patients. Should the capacity of the local hospitals include more than 25% of total capacity with COVID-19 positive patients, the Task Force would enact the cessation of advancement of the local plan and/or the restriction of prior implemented plan elements. Additionally, the Task Force will assess the local positive test rate as compared to the State of Colorado average positive test rate to determine and measure success. If the local positive test rate exceeds the State average positive test rate, the Task Force would enact the cessation of advancement of the local plan and/or the restriction of prior implemented plan elements.

Task Force Roles – The local Task Force is comprised of local government officials as well as both medical and administrative representatives from both local hospitals. Each local government body represents one voice on the Task Force and each hospital is weighted as two voices; one medical and one administrative. All organizations represented on the Task Force are represented by any and all members appropriate and necessary to the conversation at any given meeting, however hospital input is given additional weight as compared to local government input.

Phased Reopening Outline – This information is available in the “Timeline” section of the attached plan.

**YUMA COUNTY PLAN FOR MAXIMIZING PUBLIC HEALTH, WHILE MINIMIZING
STRESSORS ON CITIZENS, A POTENTIAL MEDICAL SURGE,
AND AN ECONOMIC COLLAPSE APRIL 27, 2020 FIRST PHASE TO REOPENING**

PURPOSE

In order to minimize the internal and external stressors on citizens, limit the chances for a medical surge in excess of hospital capacity, and avoid an economic collapse, the Yuma County Plan crafts a balance between addressing the current significant emotional and financial impact on citizens and businesses while maintaining public health and infection control capabilities.

Nothing in this pending plan prohibit a local governing municipality from enacting more proactive standards, including but not limited to stay at home orders or additional protective measures.

DISEASE TRANSMISSION CONTROL

- The number of daily positive COVID-19 cases has remained flat since the first positive case was reported to Yuma County at a total of 11 positive cases as of 05/11/2020.
- There are very low hospitalizations among Yuma County residents as of 05/11/2020.
- Yuma County is experiencing a positive test rate of 1 per 1000 as compared to the State average of 3.14 per 1000.

SUFFICIENT HEALTH CARE AND PUBLIC HEALTH CAPABILITIES

- Yuma County has two critical access hospitals working closely with the Northeast Colorado Health Department accessing the health risk of COVID-19.
- Yuma County hospitals have sufficient COVID-19 testing capabilities for both symptomatic and asymptomatic testing of local residents. Drive-through sampling is operational to test Yuma County residents with symptoms.
- Northeast Colorado Health team conducts investigations on every positive case. Contact tracing is also performed with people who were in direct contact with identified positive cases.
- Yuma County hospitals will use a 25% capacity COVID-19 positive threshold to determine a breach of sustainable resources. If hospitals experience an increase of COVID-19 positive patients in excess of 25% of their capacity, the local Task Force will implement a cessation of increased public openings and may institute a repeal of previously increased public openings.
- The local Task Force will compare the Yuma County positive test result ratio to that of the State of Colorado on a weekly basis and will utilize the State average of positive tests as a threshold marker for cessation of increased public openings and may consider the repeal of previously increased public openings. Currently the Yuma County positive test ration is 1 per 1000 and the State of Colorado is 3.14 per 1000.

OUTBREAK RISKS IN HIGH-VULNERABILITY SETTINGS ARE MINIMIZED

- Yuma County Jail infection and disease control protocols have been implemented with continuous monitoring and adjustment.
- Yuma County is working with local hospitals to make testing available to all critical government service employees with priority on testing employees of Yuma County Jail and the Yuma County Department of Human Services.
- Yuma County is working closely with the Northeast Colorado Health Department and local nursing homes to address policies and procedures in nursing homes.
- Yuma County nursing homes and hospitals have all established baseline staff testing and will continue to monitor staff and complete follow-up testing as needed.
- Yuma County is working closely with the Northeast Colorado Health Department and child care facilities.
- Yuma County is working closely with local hospitals to make testing available to critical businesses and large local employers.

- Yuma County is working closely with the Northeast Colorado Health Department to develop guidelines for gathering places involving high-vulnerable populations.

WORKPLACE PREVENTIVE MEASURES ARE ESTABLISHED

- Guidelines addressing prevention have been written for distribution to schools, workplaces, and other essential places as outlined in this document

RISK OF IMPORTED CASES MANAGED

- Travel for residents is limited to only essential travel. Residents are encouraged to limit travel to within the county unless essential.
- A Yuma County Task Force has been established to assess the health risks of COVID-19, develop local protocol, and to monitor COVID-19 disease transmission and control, making adjustments to guidelines as necessary.
- Yuma County is involved in a weekly meeting with members representing local hospitals, local city officials, and other local representatives.
- The local Task Force is exploring a public education campaign including the offering of voluntary testing to local citizens who have travelled outside of the County and/or region.
- There are protocols in place related to transporting patients to and from Yuma County hospitals.

COMMUNITIES ARE FULLY ENGAGED

- Yuma County is working with Northeast Colorado Health Department and healthcare facilities to implement physical distancing guidelines
- Yuma County is working with Northeast Colorado Health Department and local businesses to implement physical distancing guidelines
- Yuma County is working with Northeast Colorado Health Department, local municipalities, community organizers and local residents on education and compliance related to physical distancing guidelines
- Yuma County is working with Northeast Colorado Health Department and local municipalities and outdoor recreation facilities to implement physical distancing guidelines

TIMELINE

- Phase I: Stay at Home—Through April 26, 2020
- Phase II: Safer at Home—begins April 27, 2020
 - Curbside retail—begins May 1, 2020
 - Office 50% open—begins May 4, 2020
- Phase III: Protect Our Neighbors—Yuma County will move to a tiered Phase III model at the recommendation of the Yuma County Task Force to begin tentatively after 2,500 people per 100,000 have been tested locally and the positive test result rate is less than the State average.
 - Phase III will be assessed in three-week increments from the date of the initial State of Colorado Safer At Home Order. Public health measures including assessment of local healthcare capacity and local testing thresholds will be assessed following the implementation of each additional tier. Tiers will be assessed every three weeks to ensure the epidemiological curve remains materially unchanged by additional openings.
 - Tier 1—Three weeks following the State Safer At Home order, the local Task Force will consider the following:
 - Opening eating and drinking establishments up to 30% capacity with strict social distancing requirements and requirements to develop, publicly post, and submit to the local governing body a social distancing operating plan.
 - Opening of gyms and fitness facilities up to 30% capacity with strict social distancing requirements, strict disinfection protocols, and requirements to develop, publicly post, and submit to the local governing body a social distancing operating plan.
 - Allowing gatherings of up to 50 people following State social distancing requirements

- Tier 2 – Three weeks following the successful implementation of Tier 1 and with the local Task Force assessing less than 25% capacity utilized in local healthcare facilities and Yuma County demonstrating a positive test result rate of less than the State of Colorado average the local Task Force will consider the following:
 - Increasing utilization of eating and drinking establishments up to 50% capacity.
 - Increasing utilization of gyms and fitness facilities up to 50% capacity.
 - Allowing gatherings of 100 people following State social distancing requirements.
- Tier 3 – Three weeks following the successful implementation of Tier 2 and with the local Task Force assessing less than 25% capacity utilized in local healthcare facilities and Yuma County demonstrating a positive test result rate of less than the State of Colorado average the local Task Force will consider the following:
 - Increasing utilization of eating and drinking establishments as determined by the Task Force.
 - Increasing utilization of gyms and fitness facilities as determined by Task Force.
 - Allowing gatherings of up to 250 people following State social distancing requirements.
- Tier 4 & Beyond – Every subsequent three weeks the local Task Force will consider additional capacity and gathering sizes as appropriate based on hospital capacity usage and local epidemiological evidence as compared to the State average. At a successful Tier 4 implementation the local Task Force will consider and plan for the regularly scheduled opening of the 2020-2021 school year.

PUBLIC HEALTH RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ALL RESIDENTS OF YUMA COUNTY

- Maintain physical distancing (6 feet).
- Adults 65 years and older and high-risk populations should limit public interactions and stay at home as much as possible.
- Use cloth face coverings for interactions where physical distancing is not possible or when entering public places.
- People with symptoms should stay home and should not go to work.
- Wash hands frequently with soap and water. If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.

DETERMINING SUCCESS DURING ALL PHASES OF REOPENING

The determination on whether the social distancing policies are working will be based on: **1) the number of new cases and hospitalizations remain low, and 2) a positive test ratio of less than the State of Colorado average, and 3) the Yuma County Task Force serving as a warning system will swiftly detect an increase in community spread to prevent a breach of local hospital system capacity** among our two local hospitals (Yuma District Hospital and Wray Community District Hospital). If respective numbers for either of these measures exceeds the stated limit, actions will be taken to improve social distancing practices in Yuma County. It may be necessary to reissue local Stay at Home orders. It is vital that everyone participate in this effort.

GUIDELINES FOR ALL SECTORS:

- Perform frequent environmental cleaning and disinfection (concentrate on high touch surfaces like tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, sinks, etc.)
 - Healthcare facilities
 - Postmortem care facilities
 - Laboratories
 - Other, non-healthcare facilities
- Employees and contracted workers whose duties include close contact with members of the public shall wear a non-medical cloth face covering over the nose and mouth

- Employees are encouraged to wear a non-medical cloth face covering over the nose and mouth while working, except where doing so would inhibit the individual's health
- Maintain at least six feet distance from each other
- Monitor workforce for compatible symptoms
- Implement or maintain return to work policies
 - Healthcare facilities
 - Critical infrastructure workers after exposure

SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS BY SECTOR

Public Gatherings

- Allow public gatherings as identified in the timeline as approved by the local Task Force.
- Maintain at least six feet distance from each other.
- No festivals or other large gatherings until such time as the situation has been evaluated by the Yuma County Task Force to determine when and if festivals and other types of large gatherings can resume.

Offices

- Encourage telework, wherever possible.
- Maintain at least six feet distance from customers and each other.
- Desks, work stations, and other work areas should be separated by at least six feet. If fixed stations exist, separate employees or clients by leaving one station in between. Workstations separated by walls that are six feet or higher can remain as they are.
- Implement or maintain physical barriers for high-contact settings (e.g. reception areas).
- Implement physical distance protocols in common areas (separate tables and chairs by at least six feet).
- Place markings on the floor to maintain at least six feet distance in customer lines; try to establish one-way passage as much as possible.
- Only essential travel is allowed.
- Consider return to work in phases as applicable.
- Implement or maintain flexible sick leave policies and practices.
- Consider accommodations for high-risk individuals or populations.
- Employees and contracted workers whose duties include close contact with members of the public shall wear a non-medical cloth face covering over the nose and mouth.
- All employees are encouraged to wear a non-medical cloth face covering over the nose and mouth while working, except where doing so would inhibit the individual's health.

Retail and Personal Services (as applicable)

- Critical businesses that were open under the stay at home order should maintain the same precautions and physical distancing practices.
- As much as possible, continue curbside delivery while phasing into public opening.
- Personal services (salons, tattoo parlors, dog grooming, etc.) and non-critical can open under the following guidelines.
 - Spread people out so there is at least six feet distance between individuals throughout.
 - Limit the number of clients to limit the number of clients as allowed by the Task Force.
 - Separate workstations (tables, chairs, etc.) by six feet. If fixed stations exist, separate clients by leaving one station in between. Workstations separated by walls that are six feet or higher can remain as they are.
 - Implement or continue early opening for high-risk individuals.

- Implement or maintain physical barriers for high-contact settings (e.g. cashiers).
- Implement or maintain one-way entry/exit and aisles.
- Employees and contracted workers whose duties include close contact with members of the public shall wear a non-medical cloth face covering over the nose and mouth.
- Implement or maintain curbside services in businesses as a preferred method.
- Stagger shifts if feasible to decrease the number of employees at the business.
- Maintain at least six feet physical distancing in waiting areas.
- Place markings on the floor to maintain at least six feet distance in customer lines.
- Implement touchless payment methods when possible.
- Encourage the public to wear cloth face coverings to enter the businesses.

Restaurants

- Restaurants in Yuma County may submit social distancing plans to the local governing body that comply with established protocols. Plans may be approved by local governing agencies after such time when the Yuma County Task Force determines reopening appropriate. Plans should include the following protocols:
 - Employee requirements for health screening, preventative measures, and exclusion from the workplace if sick,
 - Specific operational changes essential to the protection of public health (for employees and customers),
 - Customer controls and crowd prevention measures—including spacing and seating requirements, and
 - Other requirements or controls which allow for the accommodation of the uniqueness of individual business operations.
- Restaurant social distancing plans will be adequately communicated, including visibly posted on site and if appropriate, posted to the business' website.
- Continuing take-out and delivery is highly encouraged.
- As much as possible, continue curbside delivery while phasing into public opening.
- Spread people/tables out so there is at least six feet distance between individuals throughout.
- Limit the number of clients to capacity limits defined by the local Task Force.
- Place markings on the floor to maintain at least six feet distance in customer lines.
- Implement touchless payment methods when possible.
- Implement or maintain physical barriers for high-contact settings (e.g. cashiers).
- Stagger shifts if feasible to decrease employee numbers at the business.
- In-room dining shall follow strict physical distancing.
- Group parties should be limited to no more than ten people. People within a party should be family members or acquaintances who have previously been in contact with each other and there is limited risk of disease transmission.
- Don't allow public sharing of utensils or condiments.
- Buffets shall have an employee serving the food, no self-serving allowed.
- Self-serving stations shall remain **closed** (drinking stations, bulk dry, etc.).
- Maintain physical distancing (six feet) in waiting areas.
- Employees and contracted workers whose duties include close contact with members of the public shall wear a non-medical cloth face covering over the nose and mouth.
- Encourage the public to wear cloth face coverings to enter the businesses.

Elective, Medical, and Health Services

- Visitation to hospitals and senior living facilities is **prohibited** at this time.

- Elective surgeries can resume.
- Both hospitals are testing all patients, regardless of symptoms, prior to commencement of elective surgeries.
- Elective health services can reopen with while adhering to the following precautions.
 - Use adequate PPE that protects the provider and the client.
 - Implement one-way entry/exit and aisles.
 - Use an appointment system to minimize the time in waiting rooms.
 - Maintain physical distancing (six feet) in waiting rooms.
 - Implement or maintain physical barriers for high-contact settings (e.g. front desk).
 - Encourage the public to wear cloth face coverings to enter the businesses.
 - Employees and contracted workers (other than providers) whose duties include close contact with members of the public shall wear a non-medical cloth face covering over the nose and mouth.

Parks/Recreation/Community Services

- Maintain physical distancing in outdoor settings (6ft while hiking, 15ft while running or biking).
- Open outdoor recreation facilities where adequate controls can be implemented to ensure physical distancing (six feet).
- Limit public gatherings to thresholds defined by the local Task Force.
- Camping should be limited to one family per campsite.
- No group camping allowed in individual campsites or group campsites.
- Playground equipment shall remain closed.
- Perform frequent cleaning and disinfection of bathrooms and high-touch surfaces.
- Only essential travel allowed; avoid traveling outside of your county or local community for recreation.
- Recreational activities involving more than 10 people in Yuma County may submit social distancing plans to the local governing body that comply with established protocols. Plans may be approved by local governing agencies after such time when the Yuma County Task Force determines reopening appropriate
 - Employee requirements,
 - Specific operational changes essential to the protection of public health (for employees and customers),
 - Customer controls and crowd prevention measures—including spacing and seating requirements, and
 - Other requirements or controls which allow for the accommodation of the uniqueness of individual business operations.
- Libraries in Yuma County may submit social distancing plans to the local governing body that comply with established protocols. Plans may be approved by local governing agencies after such time when the Yuma County Task Force determines reopening appropriate
 - Plans should include acceptable protocols in accordance with State Library guideline for processing material.
 - Employee requirements,
 - Specific operational changes essential to the protection of public health (for employees and customers),
 - Customer controls and crowd prevention measures—including spacing and seating requirements, and
 - Other requirements or controls which allow for the accommodation of the uniqueness of individual business operations.
- Museums in Yuma County may submit social distancing plans to the local governing body that comply with established protocols. Plans may be approved by local governing agencies after such time when the Yuma County Task Force determines reopening appropriate

- Plans should include acceptable protocols.
- Employee requirements,
- Specific operational changes essential to the protection of public health (for employees and customers),
- Customer controls and crowd prevention measures—including spacing and seating requirements, and
- Other requirements or controls which allow for the accommodation of the uniqueness of individual business operations.

Education

- All educational facilities located within Yuma County will adhere to the State of Colorado COVID-19 guidance with the inclusion of planning for a safe reopening of the 2020-2021 school year as scheduled.

Real Estate

- In-person home showings can resume.
- Maintain at least six feet distance from customers and each other.
- Cloth face coverings are highly encouraged.
- Prior to a showing, ensure clients are not experiencing respiratory symptoms.
- Open houses are **prohibited** at this time.

Places of Worship

- Continue online or drive-by services as much as possible.
- Can offer on-site services IF the following physical distancing and cleaning practices are possible:
 - Limit the number of participants to thresholds defined by the local Task Force.
 - Operate with strict physical distancing practices.
 - Spread people out so there is at least six feet distance between families throughout.
 - Place markings on the floor to maintain at least six feet distance where lines form.
 - Implement or maintain one-way entry/exit and aisles.
 - Implement touchless offering options as much as possible.
 - Encourage employees and the public to wear cloth facecoverings.
 - Discourage people from attending if they are experiencing any symptoms.
 - Discourage high-risk populations from attending on site-services.
 - Perform frequent cleaning and disinfection of bathrooms and high-touch surfaces.

Gyms

- Can operate **IF** the following physical distancing and cleaning practices are possible
 - Limit the number of clients to thresholds defined by the local Task Force.
 - Spread people out so there is at least six feet distance between individuals throughout.
 - Implement early opening for high-risk individuals.
 - Social distancing plans will be developed to comply with established protocols. Plans will be adequately communicated, including visibly posted on site and if appropriate, posted to the business' website.
 - Group classes are not allowed until such time as the local Task Force deems appropriate.
 - Saunas, pools (indoor and outdoor) and shared spaces should remain closed until such time as the local Task Force deems appr.
 - Saunas, pools (indoor and outdoor) in Yuma County may submit social distancing plans to the local governing body that comply with established protocols. Plans may be approved by local governing agencies after such time when the Yuma County Task Force determines reopening appropriate.

Plans should include the following protocols:

- Employee requirements,
- Specific operational changes essential to the protection of public health (for employees and customers),
- Customer controls and crowd prevention measures—including spacing and seating requirements, and
- Other requirements or controls which allow for the accommodation of the uniqueness of individual business operations.