

Governor Polis Provides Update on State's Response to COVID-19

DENVER - Governor Jared Polis today provided an update on Colorado's response to COVID-19.

"The key to our success continues to be a strong response at the individual and community level. In order to avoid unnecessary loss of life and more economic pain, we are looking to our local governments to lead during this time," said Governor Jared Polis. "No one wants a major setback and I implore our local health agencies and local governments to use the tools that have been provided to them and take more ownership of the local response. We are all in this together and we're going to have to work together to get through it, and the state will be a strong partner."

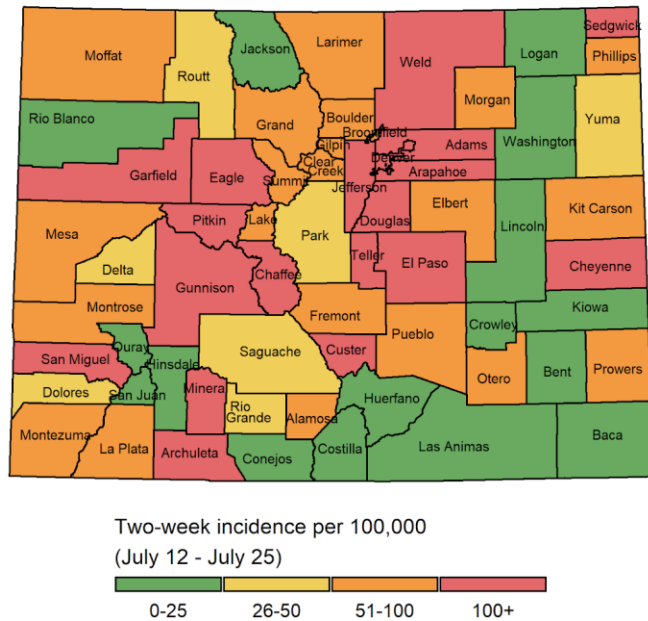
The Governor and the state's top public health experts look at four metrics when thinking about next steps:

- Predictive Model from the CU School of Public Health
- Hospital Capacity
- Growth in Cases
- Testing Results

The University of Colorado's predictive model shows that social distancing is needed at a level of at least 55%, preferably 65%, to avoid overwhelming our hospital system. Colorado is seeing hospitalizations tick back up, and as of July 16, 2020, the state's ICU bed capacity is stabilizing at 22-30%. Currently, Colorado's new case average has exceeded 500 each day. Several days last week showed new case counts of more than 600, close to what the state saw in April. These are all

critical factors that are considered when making decisions about what Colorado needs to do to mitigate the spread of this virus.

Governor Polis urged municipalities and local public health agencies to take swift, targeted action to address rising case numbers and avoid drastic action at the statewide level.



Colorado has granted variances to a number of counties, but those with higher case counts will lose their variance if they are unable to reverse these trends within two weeks. To reverse these trends, the Governor encourages counties to follow their mitigation plans. These plans include strategies such as social distancing orders, increased testing and contact tracing, enforcement of social distancing and mask wearing, and increased education. So far, 15 counties have been notified that they have exceeded the threshold, and they have two weeks to reverse their disease trend in order to keep their variance. If they are not able to reverse the trend, the variance may be revoked and the county will have to follow the Safer at Home order.

Gov. Polis also announced that Coloradans with school-enrolled children will begin to receive food benefits through the Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT) program, which began last week. More than 360,000 Colorado children are eligible for P-EBT benefits, which will reimburse families for the free and reduced-price meals that students missed while schools were closed in March, April, and May because of COVID-19.

Governor Polis also extended an [Executive Order](#) suspending certain statutes concerning taxpayer filing requirements for certain taxable property, as well as one that [allows food trucks to operate at Colorado's rest areas](#) to support the movement of commercial vehicle activities.

View the [Governor's presentation](#) and the [full news conference](#).