

MORGAN COUNTY VARIANCE REQUEST

Outdoor Gatherings

CONDITIONS FOR LIFTING RESTRICTIONS

The Governor of Colorado has set forth guidelines for obtaining a variance for communities to tailor social distancing policies to local conditions in order to promote community wellness and economic stability through Executive Order D 2020 091 Safer at Home in the Vast, Great Outdoors, Appendix G.

Morgan County is requesting a Variance to provide relief to our local economy, business community, and community health and wellness of our citizens while still ensuring we meet the intent of current Public Health Orders

1. Disease Transmission Is Suppressed and Hospital Capacity is not threatened

- The number of daily positive COVID-19 cases in Morgan County has remained relatively flat for over 2 weeks. New cases have been in the low single digits.
- Hospitalizations at local hospitals: Hospitalization of Covid-19 cases in Morgan County have been low or near zero cases at both hospitals in the County.
- Some of Morgan County's largest increases were due to outbreaks at large processing facilities and one long term care center, all of which are conducting testing and have imposed strict social distancing guidance/procedures.
- Neither hospital is overburdened with Covid-19 cases.

2. There are Sufficient Health System and Public Health Capabilities

- East Morgan County Hospital and Colorado Plains Medical Center Serve all of Morgan County and have sufficient ability to test for suspected new cases of Covid-19. Positive test results have been trending down.
- Morgan County hospitals have a capacity of 6 ICU beds at CPMC and 3 progress care beds at EMCH to serve all people needing care
- Combine Morgan County Hospitals have 11 critical and non-critical ventilators
- Both hospitals offer medical air transport services to other facilities
- Northeast Colorado Health Department developed a community medical surge plan in collaboration with local hospitals. On average, the hospitals have enough PPE to last two months under normal conditions. Northeast Colorado Health Department has reserved 5% of the critical PPE supplies from the local Medical Cache allocation to backfill the hospitals as needed
- The Northeast Colorado Health Department Epidemiology team consists of three disease surveillance specialists who do contact investigations on every positive case. Case investigations are mostly completed within 24 hours. Contact tracing is also performed with people who were in direct contact with identified positive cases
- Among positive cases in Morgan County, over half have been traced to a known Source

3. Outbreak Risks in High-Vulnerability Settings are Minimized

- Northeast Colorado Health Department advises on policies and procedures in nursing homes
- Northeast Colorado Health Department works with childcare facilities
- Northeast Colorado Health Department has worked with all facilities experiencing outbreaks in Morgan County to implement containment and control measures

4. Risk of Imported Cases Managed

- Limits have been set for non-essential travel
- People are encouraged to stay home as much as possible

5. Communities are Fully Engaged

- Northeast Colorado Health Department staff are working with healthcare facilities to implement physical distancing guidelines
- Northeast Colorado Health Department retail food licensing team, along with NCHD health educators are working with local businesses to follow current physical distancing guidelines and restaurant restrictions
- Northeast Colorado Health Department staff are working with local residents on education and compliance related to physical distancing guidelines
- Northeast Colorado Health Department is working with outdoor recreation facilities to implement physical distancing guidelines

8. PUBLIC HEALTH RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ALL RESIDENTS OF MORGAN 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.

7. Determining Success

The determination on whether the social distancing policies are working will be based on:

- 1) Keeping the number of new positive tests to less than 30 new confirmed cases in a fourteen day period.**
- 2) Staying below the threshold of 15 Covid-19 hospitalizations total between both local hospitals.**

If respective numbers for either of these measures exceeds the stated limit, actions will be taken to improve social distancing practices in Morgan County. It may be necessary to reissue local Stay at Home orders or revert to the current State's stricter guidelines. 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.)
- 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 or social distancing is accomplished
- Maintain at least six feet distance from each other
- Monitor workforce for disease symptoms
- Implement or maintain return to work policies

SPECIFIC REQUESTS BY SECTOR

Variance Request #1
Section I. H. 4.

Outdoor Public and private gatherings

- Allow outdoor and open-space gatherings up to 500 participants
- Maintain at least six feet distance from each other or non-household groups
- Attendees are encouraged to wear non-medical face coverings
- Operators, organizers or employers must implement employee screening protocols for all workers and exclude ill or symptomatic individuals
- Employees and contracted workers must wear face coverings that cover the nose and mouth at all times
- Large event organizers shall submit a written plan outlining how the organizer intends to maintain social distancing and Covid-19 related precautions to ensure the safety of attendees. Plans will be submitted to the Morgan County Board of Commissioners for approval prior to any event being held. Plans submitted shall include:
 - Detailed plans on the space or area used for the gathering or event and controls that will be implemented to maintain 6 feet distancing requirements
 - Face coverings may be required and plans should outline how the requirement will be communicated to participants and enforced
 - The plan must include methods used to register attendees so that contact tracing may occur if necessary
 - Susceptible populations will be strongly recommended to refrain for participating in any large public gathering.

Local Approval of Morgan County’s proposed Variance Request #1

Morgan County Board of County Commissioners

Mark Arndt _____

Jim Zwetzig _____

Jon Becker _____

Northeast Colorado Health Department

Director, Trish McClain _____

Colorado Plains Medical Center

CEO, Kevin Zachary _____

East Morgan County Hospital

CEO, Linda Thorpe _____