PRESS RELEASE

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State moves Garfield County to ‘high-risk’ orange on COVID-19 dial

*County commissioners had asked CDPHE to remain in the yellow ‘concern’ level*

GARFIELD COUNTY, CO – The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) has moved Garfield County into the orange, or “high-risk” category, on its COVID-19 dial, which is a tool to determine its restrictions during the pandemic. The Board of County Commissioners appealed to CDPHE earlier this week to remain in the yellow, or “concerned” category, noting that it more accurately reflects the situation in Garfield County.

In a phone meeting on Nov. 17 with Mara Brosy-Wiwchar, chief of staff at CDPHE, the board argued that Garfield County has worked with its citizens and businesses to promote education and best practices, and that further limiting the local economy would be both financially damaging and unduly punitive to all that are complying by current rules.

For Garfield County, the change means some tighter restrictions, though the state has indicated that current variances will remain in place. New variance requests are prohibited until the county is back at the yellow level. Municipalities may implement more stringent measures, but none less strict than those at the orange level.

The major changes under orange, factoring in Garfield County’s existing variances, include no more than 10 people from no more than two households at public and private gatherings; in-person office occupancy of no more than 25 percent, with remote work encouraged; indoor and outdoor events are limited to 25 percent of posted occupancy, or 50 and 75 people,
respectively, whichever is less. Personal services are also limited to 25 percent occupancy, or 25 people, whichever is less.

Retail establishments remain at 50 percent capacity, with options for curbside pick-up, delivery and shopping hours for seniors and at-risk persons. Indoor restaurant service rules remain the same, however outdoor dining areas must limit groups to no more than 10 customers per group, and patrons must be six feet apart. Restaurant liquor sales must end by 10 p.m.

Organized recreational youth or adult indoor sports are not allowed, but outdoor events may proceed with groups of 10 or less practicing safe social distancing. Houses of worship will continue to operate at yellow levels under the county’s variance. The full list of restrictions and variances under level orange as it will be applied in Garfield County can be read on the county’s public health orders webpage at www.garfield-county.com/public-health/executive-orders.

The yellow or “concern” level is when a county has more than 75 to 175 cases per 100,000 people over a 14-day period or a test positivity rate of no more than 10 percent. Orange status is in effect if a county experiences more than 175 to 350 cases per 100,000 people over a 14-day period or a test positivity rate of no more than 15 percent. Garfield County, home to roughly 58,000 people, reported 395 new positive cases (equates to 659 per 100,000) from Nov. 5 to 18, and a test positivity rate of 12.4 percent.

Limiting the disease’s spread is encouraged by having residents practice safety guidelines of wearing masks, washing their hands often, limiting travel as much as possible, and above all, staying home when ill.

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COVID-19 info
Garfield County: www.garfield-county.com
Updates - subscribe: www.garfieldcounty.net
Connect on Facebook: @garfieldhealth
Symptoms/concerns: 970.625.5200 or 970.945.6614 - English/Español
Register for emergency notifications: www.garco911.com