



## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **WE NEED EVERYONE'S HELP IN ORDER TO KEEP MOVE FORWARD AND PAST COVID-19 (INDIVIDUAL ACCOUNTABILITY IS KEY!)**

Governor Jared Polis announced today that the current Stay At Home Order will be lifted effective April 27<sup>th</sup>. This DOES NOT mean that social distancing, wearing masks, and limited social gatherings have been lifted!! Without the assistance of the public, it will be impossible to move forward with this unless everyone in the community does their part. Keeping yourself and your family and friends accountable is one way we can get on with our lives sooner than later. While it may seem obvious to some folks, others simply don't see the need to protect themselves from others and protect others from them. Having this attitude of complacency will only place our county at risk of reverting back to a county-wide stay at home order if the spread of the virus appears to increase after April 27<sup>th</sup>. It will be left up to local public health officials to put the stay at home order back in place should this happen. If the residents of Kit Carson County don't do their part and we have to go back to a mandatory Stay at Home Order, this will create more of a burden on the public health system, create more economic hardship, and will place neighbors, family members and friends at an unnecessary risk of becoming infected. The solution is simple. If every resident of Kit Carson County will do the following steps now and after the Stay At Home Order has been lifted, we will be able to get back to and maintain somewhat of a more normal life!

- Wear a face covering when in public, or while in close proximity while working at your business if you can't maintain 6 feet between workers
- Continue to be careful about travel especially avoiding unnecessary travel outside of Kit Carson County
- Limit the number of family members who go into a store at the same time to 1 or 2 people
- Refrain from visiting, hugging, shaking hands when in a public place like the grocery store
- Wash your hands frequently, especially when you have been out in the community
- Keep your hands away from your face
- Do not have prolonged gatherings of greater than 10 people (after April 27<sup>th</sup>) outside of the immediate family, even if you think it won't cause a problem.
- Stay at home if you are sick, and keep yourself from your family and friends if you have a fever, cough, or body aches.

- DO NOT GO TO WORK IF YOU ARE SICK!
- Call the nursing triage line at 719-346-7158 to determine if you should be tested for COVID-19

The Governor has outlined three phases of response to the COVID-19 pandemic:

1. **The “Urgent”Phase.** *This is where we are until April 27th*– where severe mitigation efforts are needed to slow the spread of the virus, buy time to build more health care capacity, and buy time to obtain more testing equipment. *Our ability to do these things* will determine how long this phase lasts, which is why it is critical that Coloradans, including Kit Carson County residents continue to stay home unless absolutely necessary.
2. **The “Stabilization” Phase** – This will begin April 27<sup>th</sup> - where we can begin to gradually relax restrictions as the distancing measures we have put in place bring down the rate of infections, hospitalizations, and deaths. The success of this depends on obtaining additional testing supplies and standing up a mass testing and monitoring system. *It also depends heavily on the public’s ability to continue to do social distancing and wear masks.*
3. **The “Recovery” Phase** – where things are essentially “back to normal” and COVID-19 outbreaks are sparse and handled by local health departments and the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment. This may happen a year from now. Getting to this phase will require a vaccine, some kind of anti-viral therapy that severely reduces the mortality rate, or the worst-case scenario: herd immunity that will only be achieved when a significant percentage of the population is infected with and recovers from the virus.

**Key Factors** that will help to determine which restrictions can be relaxed, when they can be relaxed, and to what degree they can be relaxed:

- Suppression of the virus – This takes ALL OF US! Every Kit Carson County resident is responsible to stop the continued spread of the virus by doing their part.
- Ability to conduct testing and containment – Kit Carson County Department of Public Health and Environment is in the planning stage to conduct mass testing in the next month.
- Ability to prevent infections for those who are most at risk
- Ability of health care system to handle increased demand – Kit Carson County is finalizing plans for alternate care facilities if they should be needed.
- Sustainability of social distancing policies, including their impact on the economy and society – Opening up our businesses, restaurants, churches, etc., while maintaining the current social distancing guidelines including staying 6 feet apart, wearing a mask, frequent hand washing, etc.

Our sincere and utmost gratitude and thanks goes out to those community members and businesses who have been doing their part in helping us keep COVID-19 from spreading in our county. Thanks, too, to the countless volunteers who have given of their time and talent to make masks, and to help take groceries, medications, and meals to those who can’t get out of their homes. If we pull together as a community and continue to be vigilant, we can beat this and get on with our lives. If you haven’t already been doing these things, please do your part in stopping the spread of COVID-19 in Kit Carson County. We certainly don’t want to see a surge in COVID-19 cases and then have to return to the rigid Stay at Home Orders. If you have any questions about this, please call the health department at 719-346-7158. You can also go to the State COVID-19 website to see the new Governor Order that will outline when each type of business can reopen and under what parameters that will be allowed.