

May 26, 2020

Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment

Attention: Jill Hunsaker Ryan, Executive Director

4300 Cherry Creek Drive South Denver, CO 80246

and via email: Jill.Ryan@state.co.us

Re: Variance Request for the Safer at Home Executive Order and Amended CDPHE Public Health Order for Fremont County

Dear Ms. Ryan,

Fremont County would like to respectfully request variance from certain provisions of the current State of Colorado orders concerning the COVID-19 pandemic, including Governor Polis's Executive Order D 2020 044 and the Amended CDPHE Order 20-28 (the "State Orders"). Fremont County, specifically is requesting exemptions from the State Orders for our own reopening plans for tasting/sales rooms, bowling alleys, and movie theatres. Relief from these provisions would allow for Fremont County to tailor our future public health orders and public health responses based on local factors that are unique to Fremont County to effectively meet and improve the economic and behavioral health needs of our community.

Fremont County's number of positive cases of COVID-19 has remained low, and the number of daily cases has seen a decline because of early and aggressive public health measures taken by Fremont County Department of Public Health & Environment and the outstanding compliance by the majority of our community members. Fremont County has a strong belief that our community can receive greater health benefits by incrementally loosening restrictions as disease activity in Fremont County continues to be suppressed. The efforts to control the spread of COVID-19 in Fremont County have created detrimental cost to the social and mental health of our rural community and to our local economy leaving many business owners facing permanent closures.

We strongly believe that the exemptions that we are requesting will have no burden on public health resources in other parts of the state because through public health orders, Fremont County will continue to be active in regulating our business community, social behaviors, events, and control spread of COVID-19.

Fremont County has a robust public health information system for the residents and business owners of Fremont County, including an EOC team, dedicated COVID hotline, social media updates, web content, and ongoing local media outreach. Fremont County has implemented a business safety protocol in which businesses are required to provide an application that indicates they are meeting social distancing requirements, posting signs, implementing symptom checking of employees, and lists any other measures they will take within their business to ensure that they can operate safely.

Fremont County Department of Public Health & Environment can demonstrate the following:

- 1) A sustained low case load of COVID-19 cases
 - a. Fremont County has demonstrated proof of two conditions, very low case counts of COVID-19 within Fremont County.
 - b. Fremont County has had a total of only 20 lab confirmed positive cases and 5 probable cases bringing our total to 25 cases out of a total population of 47,839 residents in Fremont County.
- 2) St. Thomas More Hospital is safely able to treat all patients without resorting to crisis standards of care.
 - a. There is one hospital located within Fremont County, St Thomas More Hospital. STMH has 4 ICU beds, 25 med surg beds and 4 ventilators; none of which are currently in use.
 - b. Per Nancy Bartkowiak, Emergency Manager at St Thomas More Hospital they also have enough PPE supplies (gowns, gloves, N95, and face shields).
- 3) Testing can be performed for all symptomatic people and asymptomatic persons meeting criteria
 - a. Fremont County Department of Public Health & Environment is currently conducting drive through testing twice a week with capacity to test 50 individuals each of those days, as well as go out to the local nursing homes to do in house testing as it is needed for residents.
 - b. Testing is also being offered for symptomatic individuals with a provider order through the Centura Health Urgent care location in Canon City.
- 4) Active monitoring can be accomplished for all COVID-19 cases and their contacts
 - a. Positive cases are being tracked through CEDRS
 - b. Follow up investigation and tracing are able to be done immediately through Fremont County Department of Public Health & Environment.
 - c. Fremont County Department of Public Health & Environment is able to follow up with positive and probable cases for symptom monitoring, compliance checks and resource provision.
- 5) Clear physical distancing protocols have been implemented
 - a. Vulnerable populations and those who are at an increased risk of serious health conditions are encouraged to stay home, avoid group gatherings and teleworks as much as possible.
 - b. Cloth face coverings are highly encouraged to be used by anyone entering places open to the public.
 - c. Employees of all businesses are to be screened for symptoms prior to starting their work shift, anyone with symptoms must be excluded from working.
 - d. Physical distancing measures must be followed to ensure 6ft distances.
- 6) Measures of mitigation (when would restrictions need to be tightened)
 - a. If there are more than 25 cases in a 7-day period.
 - b. FCDPHE could not effectively perform contact tracing and surveillance due to an uptake in the number of active cases.

- c. STMH could not safely provide care for all patients without resorting to crisis standards of care.

Attachment F to this variance request provide the specific information to variances that Fremont County is requesting to implement once State approval has been provided. The Board of County Commissioners has voted and approved these measures on May 26, 2020, to support this partial variance in place of the current provisions of the State Safer at Home Order.

Fremont County respectfully requests that you grant our request for relief from certain provisions in the State's current orders as detailed in this request and that this variance go into effect immediately upon your approval. I certify that the above information is correct to my knowledge. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Thank you,



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