



Prevent • Promote • Protect

Office of Communication

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CORRECTION/CLARIFICATION: The indoor capacity limitations will go into effect on Monday, August 3.

If businesses have questions, they can direct them to the following email address:
covidbusinessrecovery@elpasoco.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

July 31, 2020

Contact: Michelle Hewitt, Public Health Information Officer
(719) 578-3239 office; (719) 244-1947 cell

State and local officials announce next steps regarding community mitigation strategies and variances

El Paso County, CO - El Paso County Public Health is partnering with the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, El Paso County Board of Commissioners, City of Colorado Springs, and the Colorado Springs Chamber & EDC to develop strategies to curb the spread of COVID-19.

A news briefing to outline the mitigation strategies will take place at the Pikes Peak Regional Office of Emergency Management today, Friday, July 31 at 3:15 p.m.

WHO: Dr. Robin Johnson, El Paso County Public Health
Colorado Springs Mayor John Suthers
El Paso County Commissioner Mark Waller
Dirk Draper, Colorado Springs Chamber & EDC

WHERE: 3755 Mark Dabling Blvd., Colorado Springs, Colo. 80907
News conference will be streamed on the El Paso County Public Health, City and County Facebook pages.

MEDIA: Media should designate one pool camera each for Colorado Springs media and Denver media. Please arrive by 3 p.m. to set up.
Media are welcome to tune in on the Facebook live broadcasts.
Questions may be submitted in advance or during the broadcast to 719-344-4231.

Over the past few months, CDPHE has approved several variances for the county, allowing larger gathering sizes for indoor and outdoor events, personal recreation, restaurants and more. The variances, which were approved at a low threshold of disease burden, included the need for a mitigation plan should case numbers pass certain thresholds. Throughout the entire process,

Public Health and community partners have used the data to guide informed decision making. Most recently, El Paso County has been experiencing a steady increase in cases. When El Paso County's case numbers exceeded the variance disease transmission thresholds and the test positivity rate, county public health officials immediately notified CDPHE and began collaborating closely to develop targeted strategies to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. Together, they identified solutions and committed to implementing the following measures:

- [Public health and city officials have agreed to temporarily reduce their indoor capacity to 100 people, except for houses of worship. Prior, they were allowed to have up to 175 people. This will go into effect for all El Paso County on Monday, August 3.](#)
- Officials have agreed to collaborate to explore options for a free drive-through community-based testing site.
- County and city leaders and the Colorado Springs Chamber & EDC have made a commitment to advocate for increased teleworking.

"We appreciate the support from CDPHE and all of our community partners," said Susan Wheelan, El Paso County Public Health Director. "First and foremost, our priority is to protect the health and well-being of our residents. We are grateful for the opportunity to discuss realistic and actionable mitigation measures we can implement as a county, and we remain committed to utilizing all of the prevention tools available to slow the spread of COVID-19."

This will be a temporary suspension of only those variances affecting indoor spaces for two weeks, at which time we will reassess. Public health, city, county and business leaders are confident these stepped up mitigation efforts will help slow the spread of the virus. Public Health, along with community partners are grateful for the tireless efforts of residents to help fight COVID-19 and are optimistic that the community can work together to bring the numbers back down.

"Colorado's success in crushing this virus, saving lives and preventing more economic damage is connected to people doing the right thing, and to a strong response from the state, local governments, and public health departments," said Jill Hunsaker Ryan, CDPHE's executive director. "The State applauds El Paso County's public health officials, county commissioners, Mayor Suthers, and business leaders for finding proactive ways to protect the community and taking the steps needed to reverse the negative trend in El Paso County. "

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