El Paso County, CO
Public Health

Prevent • Promote • Protect

Office of Communication

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COVID-19: Interim Guidance for Community and Faith-Based Organizations

Many of our community members are wondering how their daily lives may be altered by COVID-19, particularly meaningful engagement at community and faith-based organizations. At this point, El Paso County Public Health is not asking community and faith-based organizations to pause operations or for all members to stay home from gatherings. We do advise preparing emergency plans and taking steps to protect vulnerable members. Community and faith-based organizations have an important role to play in providing support and guidance to their members.

Guidance for members of community and faith-based organizations

- If you're over 60, have an existing health condition like heart disease, lung disease or diabetes, or have a compromised immune system, El Paso County Public Health advises you to consider staying home from community and faith-based gatherings. If you choose not to attend in person, staying involved via the web or phone are great options.

- If you're sick, stay home.

Guidance for leaders and staff of community and faith-based organizations

Planning and preparing ahead of an outbreak:

- Update your emergency operations plan. Communicate with your emergency operations coordinator or planning team, and other relevant partners to include COVID-19 planning.

- Identify space that can be used to separate sick people if needed. Remember if possible, sick people should always stay home.

- Develop an emergency communication plan for distributing timely and accurate information to workers and those you serve. Remember, your members may look to you for guidance. Check www.elpasocountyhealth.org for updates.

- Identify actions to take if you need to temporarily postpone or cancel events, programs, and services, especially for groups at greater risk such as older adults or people with chronic health conditions. Virtual communications are a great option.

- Consider adjusting rituals that could increase the chance of disease transmission, such as communion.

- Promote the practice of everyday preventative actions.

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- Provide COVID-19 prevention supplies at your organization (e.g., soap, hand sanitizer that contains at least 60 percent alcohol, tissues, trash baskets, and a couple of disposable facemasks, just in case someone becomes sick during a gathering).

- Plan for staff absences by developing flexible attendance and sick-leave policies, plan for alternative coverage, and monitor and track COVID-19 related staff absences.

- Engage with stigmatized groups and speak out against negative behaviors to help counter stigma and discrimination.

- Regularly clean and disinfect common surfaces. For guidelines [click here](#).

Taking action if COVID-19 is spreading:

- Stay informed about local COVID-19 information and updates.

- Put your emergency operations and communication plans into action.

- Communicate with your community members if events and services are changed, postponed, or cancelled.

- Emphasize [everyday preventive actions](#) through intensified communications with employees and visitors to your organization.

- During an event, if someone becomes sick separate them into an isolated room and ask them to leave as soon as possible.

- Regularly clean and disinfect common surfaces. For guidelines [click here](#).

- Our goal is to keep you informed and at ease as we continue to navigate COVID-19. We will continue to update you as more information becomes available. Please visit www.elpasocountyhealth.org for helpful information about COVID-19.