



## MEDIA RELEASE

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For IMMEDIATE Release

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### COVID-19 WEEK 13 UPDATE

The Kit Carson County Department of Public Health and Environment continues to conduct COVID-19 testing throughout each week. Since receiving the variance for churches and restaurants on May 16<sup>th</sup>, the Department and hospital have tested an additional 100 individuals – and all tests have been negative. ***The county has had zero positive cases in four weeks.*** This is a huge milestone and plans are underway to move to Phase 3 of the County Safer at Home plan that includes expanding the ability to open additional areas and to allow for larger groups to gather. A second variance application has been sent to the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment to open indoor entertainment (such as theaters), indoor recreation (such as gyms, rec centers and bowling), and expand the ability to have groups up to 250 per acre of outdoor space to gather. The result from the request is expected to be received in the next week.

Effective June 4, 2020, the fifth amended Executive Public Health order 20-28 issued by Governor Polis gives permission for the following:

- Playgrounds and outdoor sports facilities, such as tennis and handball courts, may be open for use for no more than 10 people at a time. High touch areas should be cleaned and disinfected frequently.
- Outdoor swimming pools may open at 50% capacity, limited to no more than 50 people, with the bathrooms and showers open but the lockers remain closed. Frequently touched surfaces, shared objects, and bathrooms should be cleaned and disinfected every hour.
- Organized recreational youth or adult league sports may resume activities with no more than 25 players outdoors or 10 players indoors. Parents may attend youth sports activities but must remain 6 feet apart from non-household members. Spectators are strongly discouraged for adult sports. The sports league must retain records of who played in case later disease outbreak investigations become necessary.
- Gyms, recreation centers and indoor pools may open, with no more than 10 people per room, maintaining 6 feet distancing. Sharing of equipment is discouraged, and equipment must be cleaned and disinfected between uses. Restrooms and showers are open, while lockers remain closed.

In summary, the latest PHO 20-28 allows playgrounds, outdoor sports facilities, outdoor pools, organized adult and youth sports leagues, gyms/rec centers and indoor pools to open with restrictions to the number of people allowed at one time.

Events that continue to be disallowed include:

Activities and gatherings with more than 10 people, sports tournaments, fairs/festivals/parades, receptions with more than 10 people in attendance, rodeos, car and horse racing, and sports events except sports leagues.

The Kit Carson County Board of Health (aka Board of County Commissioners) has reviewed and approved several requests for youth and Ag-related venues. These are activities that are considered as “essential activities” and are allowable with social distancing protocols put into place. All activities that occur in the county that will have groups greater than 10 need to be reported to the health department so protocols and plans that keep the spread or reoccurrence of COVID-19 from occurring can be written and put into place before the event occurs. The protocols are in a check-off form and are easy to complete. The Health Officer for the county will discuss your plans with you and give you suggestions for conducting the event while maintaining the social distancing practices that are required. Please contact Dawn James at 719-346-7158, ext. 116 to find out more about obtaining permission for your event.

Receiving variances does not mean that we are back to “business as usual”. There have been large outbreaks of COVID reported in Yuma and Washington County this past week. The purpose of variances are to loosen restrictions in Kit Carson County that were created by EO 20-28 while at the same time, decreasing the likelihood that COVID will have a resurgence. Active surveillance and testing has been intensified by the KCC Health Department. The more tests we conduct, the more we can demonstrate that we are maintaining a COVID-19 free County. If we do have a positive test, we can identify it early and get it under control before it creates an outbreak. The health department hosts “Free Test Friday” Tests are free to the public and do not require a doctor’s order. Symptomatic and asymptomatic people are urged to participate. A reservation is required and you can call Tammy or Denise at 719-346-7158 to schedule your test.

**The most important thing to remember about all of this is that it will take everyone living here to take social distancing seriously to keep COVID-19 from becoming more prevalent, thus delaying our continued goal to return to normal activities.** The same standards apply now as they did a month ago. Frequent hand washing, wearing of masks when in crowded public venues, limiting travel outside of the County to only necessary activities such as medical appointments, etc., and staying home as much as possible will keep us moving in the right direction. For more information, or for any questions you may have about plans for events, activities, or opening businesses, please call 719-346-7158, ext. 116.

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