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## **Garfield County Public Health Suppression Plan for Third Variance Request**

### **Purpose**

The key premise of Garfield County's plan is to ensure social distance requirements are well understood and can be met by businesses and the general public as gathering sizes are progressively increased.

In general, Garfield County is working to move away from an approach that permits certain businesses to operate and prohibits others. Instead, a consistent approach to all businesses based on the known disease transmission mechanism and ensuring social distancing requirements will be implemented. Guidance, however, will be provided by type of business as safe operations will still remain business specific.

### **Operational Plan**

- Real time operational dashboard is available for public and state monitoring at: <https://www.garfield-county.com/public-health/garfield-county-covid-19-cases/>
- Testing capacity has continued to increase across the county, with new community-testing sites. Anyone who meets testing criteria can obtain a test if wanted.
- Newly reported cases of COVID-19 continue to decrease or flatten out at levels that do not exceed capacity to investigate.
- Newly reported cases of COVID-19 will be investigated within 24-48 hours of receipt.
- All cases will continue to be adequately isolated for a minimum of 10 days with an objective of no household transmission.
- Targeted outreach has been and will be conducted as clusters are identified.
- Providing an integrated approach for individuals who are asked to quarantine and isolate on their health care and human services needs, as appropriate.
- Continue to evaluate and maintain capacity of the health and medical system to meet the community's medical needs without needing crisis standards of care.
- Continued maintenance of a PPE stock to respond to a community-wide outbreak, and PPE supply chains have been re-established.
- Protect residents that may be at greatest risk for severe disease (Adults 60 years of age and older, people with underlying health conditions).
- Garfield County Public Health has reviewed nearly 900 business social distancing plans to encourage appropriate social distancing and business practices.
- Garfield County Sheriff's Office, along with partners has brought in CredibleMind as a resource for behavioral health care for residents.

### **Background**

This plan is based on the [National Coronavirus Response, A Road Map to Reopening](#) by AEI in consultation with Johns Hopkins University. In addition, when assessing risks associated with

different business sectors, the [Public Health Principles for a Phased Reopening During COVID-19](#) from Johns Hopkins University is being used.

Below we describe how Garfield County can meet and maintain a set of four metrics that indicate reopening and support additional opening in all phases. Additionally, the first two phases of lifting restrictions are described with specific variances outlined for the Safer At Home order. Both phases proposed below are largely in alignment with the direction of many other LPHAs throughout Colorado, as well as the Safer At Home order.

### Triggers for Reopening

The National Coronavirus Response, A Road Map to Reopening outlines the following four triggers should be met before lifting restrictions:

1. A sustained decrease in cases for at least 14 days
2. Hospitals are safely able to treat patients without resorting to crisis standards of care
3. Testing can be performed for all people with symptoms consistent with COVID-19 infection
4. Active monitoring can be accomplished for all COVID-19 cases and their contacts

Garfield County has continued to meet the triggers outlined above and we are confident we are ready to take a step beyond our second variance to our Variance Phase III as outlined in The Roadmap to Recovery (see attached). Below is further description of how Garfield County is meeting these requirements, which can also be found on the [Garfield County Data Dashboard](#):

**1. We continue to see a reduction in cases past the Phase I of Garfield County's Safer-At-Home, beginning May 4<sup>th</sup>.**

- a. All data in Garfield County indicates a peak during Mar 9-Mar 24.
- b. New case reports have flattened since May 4<sup>th</sup>, while the overall trend is negative since the peak of cases mid-March.
- c. Similarly, this same trend can be demonstrated by self-reports of onset, onset dates from lab-confirmed cases, test date for lab confirmed cases, out-patient and in-patient hospital data and positivity rate for tests performed.
- d. Behavioral health care needs continue to be a concern. Our community is experiencing a great deal of fear, anxiety and depression within our community regarding job loss and isolation. We hope that with the introduction of CredibleMind individuals will find another resource to help during these times.
- e. Triggers have also been established for when to **tighten restrictions to Variance Phase I**. It is not one trigger, rather a combination of the following:
  - i. Number of hospitalizations,
  - ii. Case count exceeding 60 new cases over 14-day period (per first variance),
  - iii. Increase at outpatient clinics (based on our trend data),
  - iv. Increasing trend of percent of tests positive over 15 days, and self-reports.

**2. Our Garfield County Hospitals are safely able to treat all patients requiring hospitalization without resorting to crisis standards of care.**

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- a. The data for hospital and medical system capacity mirrors the disease surveillance data.
- b. Admissions and ED visits have not been overwhelmed beyond capacity since April 27<sup>th</sup>.
- c. Reports from Valley View Hospital, Grand River Health and from our EMS services continue to report no increase in call volume related to COVID-19 call.
- d. Medical providers have been able to, at their discretion, reopen for elective procedures.
- e. All medical providers have reinstated wellness and preventative visits.
- f. Indications from hospitals in neighboring counties of Eagle and Pitkin indicate a similar trend with current census being low.

**3. Garfield County is able to test all people with COVID-19 symptoms**

- a. Testing capacity in the Garfield County is robust, and community-based testing sites have been established since our first variance.
- b. A variety of FDA/EUA approved tests are available throughout Garfield County.

**4. Garfield County is able to conduct active monitoring of confirmed cases and their contacts.**

- a. The capacity for disease prevention staff has been increased during the COVID-19 response and will be maintained for the duration of this event.
- b. With cases being reported the capacity to actively monitor each patient is the highest priority. This includes case investigations and contact tracing, as well as ensuring active monitoring, housing and other necessities for the duration of isolation and/or quarantine.
- c. Issuance of orders will be automated to the degree possible to ensure patients receive orders on the date of report.
- d. Garfield County's capacity can accomplish 15 case investigations plus contact tracing (average 5-6 close contacts per case) per day with the ability to increase internal capacity as needed. We have the capacity and ability to hire additional contact traces as needed.

**5. For the purposes of this Third Variance Request, and determining next phases of reopening, Garfield County will utilize its Roadmap to Recovery. As of June 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020 Garfield County is ready to move to Variance Phase III (see attached).**

- a. Garfield County is not expected to move to a phase without restrictions until such time as an effective vaccine is available.
- b. **Summary of variances being requested**
  - All businesses be considered critical and all activities necessary.
  - Remove occupancy limitations, as well as gathering size restrictions, and instead rely on strict social distance guidelines as outlined by the state public health orders.
- c. **Summary of elements that will remain consistent with Safer-at-Home**
  - Protections for vulnerable populations.
  - Social distancing protocols.

Face covering language will remain consistent with the state's public health and executive orders.  
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