

Gunnison County Virtual Town Hall: April 13, 2020 | COVID-19 Follow-Up Questions

On Monday, April 13, 2020, [Gunnison County officials conducted a Virtual Town Hall](#) to address questions related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The panel: Joni Reynolds (Public Health Director), Jonathon Houck (Gunnison County Commissioner), CJ Malcom, (Chief of Emergency Services for Gunnison Valley Health) and Jodie Leonard (Viral Infection Specialist for Gunnison Valley Health).

Some questions were live taken during the broadcast (Zoom, KBUT). Find below a list of follow-up questions, answered by Reynolds.

- Texas is lifting restrictions. Does that factor in?
 - No. Each state and municipality need to operate in the manner that they find to be in their own interest.
- If a second spike occurs and our associations are not as strong then as now, how will we mitigate this? With field houses, hotels, buildings or shall we build a wing on GVH?
 - We are hoping to keep any subsequent spikes in outbreaks at a manageable level. The Fred Field Center will remain an option for treatment until all of this is behind us.
- Were second homeowners testing positive frequently?
 - No. The decision was made on the limited resources and higher altitude exacerbating effects on COVID-19 patients.
- When you made the fifth amendment to the order, it caused many to leave immediately. Did you consider that some of them were likely to be infected already, might get infected in their travels, and/or would spread the disease to their destinations?
 - This was considered when the 5th PHO was put into place. That is why the exemption process was also outlined in that public health order.
- What was the rationale for determining that shelter (i.e. real estate services) is not essential and that pot shops and liquor stores are essential? I have to be out of my rental by the end of next month and my realtor has told me that they are restricted from showing either vacant listed homes or rentals.
 - The Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment (CDPHE) Public Health Order is more restrictive with real estate services therefore, the CDPHE Public Health Order controls. It is necessary to get guidance and clarification on the State Public Health Order directly from the State.
- Is there any specific messaging about social distancing being directed at the younger demographic in Gunnison? Last weekend I saw a front yard party in Gunnison with

about 9 people in their 20's happening and social distancing was not happening. It makes me worry that maybe this demographic is not taking it seriously.

- [Please report any Public Health Violations online](#) OR contact the local law enforcement for follow-up on this type of gathering. We have been trying to target the most broad swath of the population in any messaging we put out. Probably the most targeted to this demographic is the messaging at Hartman Rocks and other recreation areas though.
- Are the new positive tests in our county from health care workers or general public?
 - Yes we continue to have positive tests for COVID-19. The positive test results have decreased as expected with the implementation of the Public Health Orders.
- Is there a specific "mask" requirement for being in public right now? I've only seen about 50% of people out in public wearing masks, just curious if it's required or not.
 - No, it is a recommendation.
- Is the county enforcing folks wearing masks in the grocery store and post office?
 - No, it is a recommendation.
- Can you comment on present recommendations on face masks - types to use (common surgical masks, cloth homemade etc), ability to clean and reuse and when to use them?
 - Masks are highly recommended but not required. Surgical masks are the best, but the public should not use them at the expense of inventory for health workers. For the general public homemade cloth masks are very useful and many good plans exist online, including ones that require no sewing.
- How can we open more open space in the county to properly social distance? All of the gates being closed at Hartmans and on dry forest service roads seems counter intuitive. Why are we bottlenecked at Hartmans? We have 2 residents per square km. Why can we not open up the space?
 - This was a decision by the BLM and Forest Service and not the Public Health Director in an effort to be able to better enforce the "no visitors" aspect of the Public Health Orders.
- How can residents of Taylor Park assist being that we are indeed so far from responders. Is there a role we can play here?
 - Play it safe, keep it conservative and limit your exposure to risk.
- Can we test the whole valley for antibodies?
 - Ideally we would have mass testing for the County. At this time there is a national (and international) shortage and high demand for all testing. There are many tests that are under the FDA Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) for

validation testing but have not yet been licensed by FDA. We are working every path to obtain testing materials.

- The exemption process for short visits (no overnight stay) appears to be declined, yet certain decisions to deny an exemption defy logic. When someone has property in the rural Western section of Gunnison County and can't access their property to maintain it even when they will have no contact (and may never see another person) on the way or after they arrive. Yet, at the same time, people are leaving the county to shop in adjacent counties and then return to an unenforceable self-quarantine. These individuals are exposing the county to greater risk than a non-resident property owner that never has any interaction with others (as in the example above). How do you reconcile this inequity in the way the order is implemented?
 - It is required for individuals to access essential services. While it appears to be an inequity, the exemption review process is prioritizing safety and reducing non-essential travel.
- Why can any number of people enter the grocery store at a time without protective gear but retail businesses cannot allow 1 person in to shop?
 - Essential services, including grocery stores, are exempt in the public health orders to assure all individuals can access essential services. Safety requirements have been implemented to restrict the number of customers (based on square footage), physical (social) distancing, hand hygiene, masking and disinfection procedures.
- What is the best way we as a community can support each other?
 - Check in on your friends, family and neighbors. Be positive and share positive messaging. Understand and help others understand that this storm will blow over one day. Be kind.
- My question is for everyone how do we continue to protect ourselves and our business after the 30th? I suspect a lot of people all over the US might have broken the rules this past weekend!! And I felt like I saw a lot more traffic around town today!! I think we may see an increased numbers of positives or suspected cases in two weeks! So I for one. am happy our date was extended to the 30th! Although I worry for our community and our business! And also want to thank you all for being proactive!! I appreciate everything you guys have done!!
 - That part will be the dance and will not be a linear progression but will be gradual. Our goal is to keep the Rate of Transmission below 1 to not experience an exponential and unmanageable increase in infections. We don't have specifics yet, but we are thinking through how we can best protect our community while also opening back up to some business.

- It feels unreasonable to say that people can only go for walks with household members. Isn't there a danger to people's mental health when they live alone & are denied social connection?
 - There is, and it is one that we struggle with with every one of these Public Health Orders. If you know of someone struggling with mental health please have them reach out to the resources on our Community Resources page.

To view a recording of the Gunnison County Virtual Town Hall on April 13, 2020, [visit kbut.org](https://www.kbut.org).