CONTINUATION OF STATEWIDE PUBLIC HEALTH ORDER #2: FORBIDDING GATHERINGS OF TEN (10) PEOPLE OR MORE

In an effort to stop the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19), the Wyoming Department of Health finds it necessary to protect the health of the public by implementing emergency measures, in accordance with the White House Guidelines, to forbid gatherings of ten (10) people or more, with certain exceptions. This Order is effective immediately, and shall remain in effect through April 17, 2020, unless the Wyoming Department of Health revokes or extends this Order before April 17, 2020.

FINDINGS

1. COVID-19 was first detected in Wuhan, China in 2019, and since then has spread to over 60 countries including the United States. There are 70 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Wyoming as of 11:10 a.m. on March 27, 2020, as well as the presence of community spread. It is expected that more cases will be diagnosed.

2. COVID-19 is a respiratory illness, transmitted through person-to-person contact or by contact with surfaces contaminated with the virus. Persons infected with COVID-19 may become symptomatic two to fourteen days after exposure. The symptoms of COVID-19 include fever, cough, and shortness of breath. In some cases, COVID-19 can result in severe disease including hospitalization, admission to an intensive care unit, and death, especially among older adults and persons with serious underlying health conditions.

3. The World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a worldwide pandemic as of March 11, 2020.

4. On March 13, 2020, the President of the United States declared a national emergency concerning the coronavirus, specifically stating that, in "December 2019 a novel (new) coronavirus known as SARS-CoV-2 ("the virus") was first detected in Wuhan, Hubei Province, People's Republic of China, causing outbreaks of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) that has now spread globally [...] The spread of COVID-19 within our Nation's communities threatens to strain our Nation's healthcare systems. [...] Additional measures [...] are needed to successfully contain and combat the virus in the United States."

5. On March 13, 2020, Wyoming Governor Mark Gordon declared a State of Emergency and Public Health Emergency in the State of Wyoming, stating that on March 11, 2020, an individual within the State of Wyoming tested presumptive positive for COVID-19 and the State of Wyoming is experiencing a public health emergency in response to the evolving COVID-19 outbreak.

6. Governor Gordon's Declaration of a State of Emergency and Public Health Emergency directs the Wyoming Department of Health to take all appropriate and necessary actions, and that in the judgment of the Director of the Wyoming Department of Health, any actions necessary should be taken to provide aid to those locations where there is a threat or danger to public health, safety, and welfare.

7. The guidelines issued from the White House on March 16, 2020, specify that with evidence of community transmission within a state, bars, restaurants, food courts, gyms, and other indoor and outdoor venues where groups of people congregate should be closed. The guidelines further specify that social gatherings of ten (10) people or more should be avoided.

8. A significant number of Wyoming citizens are at risk of serious health complications, including death, from COVID-19. Although most individuals who contract COVID-19 do not become seriously ill, people with mild symptoms place other vulnerable members of the public at significant risk.

9. Counties in Wyoming have requested orders of this kind following the White House guidelines, and the best manner of protecting the health of the citizens of Wyoming is through a consistent order spanning the entire State.

10. A large number of persons with serious infections may compromise the ability of healthcare systems in Wyoming to deliver the necessary healthcare to the public.

11. Wyoming Statute §§ 35-1-240(a)(i) and (iv) provides all the rights and powers for the Wyoming Department of Health, through the State Health Officer, Dr. Alexia Harrist, M.D., PhD, or under her directive through other employees of the Wyoming Department of Health, to forbid gatherings of people when necessary to protect public health.

12. In addition to the above findings, stopping the spread of COVID-19 includes washing your hands often, practicing social distancing by avoiding close contact with others, staying at least six feet away from someone who is ill or showing signs of illness, avoiding touching your face, eyes, nose and mouth, and covering your cough or sneeze into your elbow or by using a tissue.

ORDER

1. Gatherings of ten (10) people or more are prohibited in order to help stop the spread of COVID-19 and protect the health of the public.

2. "Gatherings" are any planned or spontaneous event, public or private, bringing together, or likely bringing together, ten (10) people or more in a single room or a single confined space (whether indoor or outdoor) at the same time.

3. Gatherings at the following are exempted from this Order:

    a. Hotels and motels for lodging purposes;

    b. Livestock auctions;

    c. Groups of workers being transported to a location for their jobs;

    d. Government business, military and National Guard facilities, law enforcement, jails, secure treatment centers, and correctional facilities, including any facility operated by

the Wyoming Department of Corrections, and any facility used to respond to natural disasters or public health emergencies;

e. State and local government facilities, including government service centers;

f. Relief facilities, including food pantries and shelter facilities;

g. Residential buildings;

h. Grocery stores, markets, convenience stores, pharmacies, drug stores;

i. Truck stops, gas stations, and auto-repair facilities;

j. Retail or business establishments, where more than ten (10) people may be present but are generally not within six (6) feet of one another;

k. Healthcare facilities, including hospitals, medical facilities, home health agencies, personal care agencies, hospices, adult family homes, mental health centers, and pharmacies;

l. Alcohol and drug treatment centers; and

m. Long-term care and assisted living facilities, including nursing homes and assisted living facilities, as long as the facility complies with guidance and directives from the CDC, the Wyoming Department of Health, and appropriate licensing and regulatory agencies.

4. Any gathering not covered by this Order should follow the public health recommendations of the Centers for Disease Control and the Wyoming Department of Health, including washing your hands often with soap and water, practicing social distancing by avoiding close contact with others including meetings over ten (10) people, avoiding touching your face, eyes, nose and mouth, and covering your cough or sneeze into your elbow or by using a tissue.

5. Additional exceptions to the prohibitions in this Order may be granted, at the discretion of the County Health Officer, under the direction and supervision of the State Health Officer, if demonstrated, in writing, to the County Health Officer that people at a gathering will maintain at least six (6) feet of space between one another, and that effective cleaning will be performed before and after the gathering.

6. This Order supplements the statewide public health order titled Continuation of Statewide Public Health Order Closing of Bars, Restaurants, Theaters, Gymnasiums, Child Care Facilities, K-12 Schools, Colleges, Universities, and Trade Schools dated March 27, 2020.

7. This Order supersedes all previous individual county orders authorized by the Wyoming State Health Officer under Wyo. Stat. Ann. § 35-1-240(a)(iv). To the extent any county order is more restrictive, the more restrictive provisions of the county order shall continue to apply.

As the State Health Officer, I deem this Order necessary to protect the public health. *See* Wyo. Stat. Ann. § 35-1-240(a)(iv). I will reassess the necessity of this Order as appropriate to do so and according to accepted epidemiological and medical standards. Any person or legal entity that violates this Order shall be subject to criminal prosecution under Wyo. Stat. Ann. §§ 35-1-105 and -106.

DATED THIS 27 DAY OF March, 2020.

Alexia Harrist
Wyoming State Health Officer