

## **ORDER OF HEALTH OFFICER September 3, 2020**

WHEREAS, the World Health Organization has declared the worldwide outbreak of COVID-19 Novel Coronavirus a pandemic;

WHEREAS, all states in the United States, including Montana, have experienced confirmed cases of COVID-19;

WHEREAS, the Yellowstone County Unified Health Command has activated response plans and protocols to prepare for cases of COVID-19 in Yellowstone County;

WHEREAS, the Yellowstone County Unified Health Command and RiverStone Health have worked to identify, contact, and as appropriate isolate, quarantine, monitor, and/or test individuals in Yellowstone County who have been potentially exposed to COVID-19 in coordination with the State of Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services and the Centers for Disease Control;

WHEREAS, Montana and Yellowstone County have experienced significant increases in the number of cases and close contacts over the last several weeks that have substantially strained and at times exceeded the capacity of local public health systems;

WHEREAS, residents of senior living congregate care facilities (such as skilled nursing facilities, assisted living facilities, memory care facilities, and senior adult group homes) are especially vulnerable to increased risk of illness and death from COVID-19;

WHEREAS, the Governor of Montana issued a Directive on June 25, 2020 that substantially reduces restrictions on visitation of residents living in senior living and assisted living facilities;

WHEREAS, Yellowstone County has experienced confirmed COVID-19 cases affecting staff and residents of multiple senior living and assisted living facilities, which represents a threat to vulnerable residents living in such facilities;

WHEREAS, it is widely accepted that the use of face coverings substantially reduces the risk of transmission of droplet-spread disease, including COVID-19;

WHEREAS, proactively implementing mitigation and containment measures to slow the spread of the virus is in the best interests of Yellowstone County and its people;

WHEREAS, pursuant to Section 50-2-118 of the Montana Code Annotated, a local health officer in carrying out the purpose of the public health system shall take steps to limit contact between people in order to protect the public health from imminent threats;

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED, pursuant to Title 50, Chapter 2, Part 1, and specifically Section 50-2-118 of the Montana Code Annotated:

**Effective at 12:01 AM MDT on Monday September 14, 2020, visitation to residents of senior and assisted living facilities, including but not necessarily limited to skilled nursing facilities, assisted living facilities, memory care facilities, and adult group homes, shall be allowed subject to the following requirements and restrictions:**

- **NO active cases of COVID-19 among staff or residents of the facility.**
- **Compliance with any current Governor’s directive related to visitation;**
- **Outdoor visitation only. In cases where the resident cannot physically move outside the facility, visitation can occur through open windows with the resident inside and the visitor(s) outside;**
- **Visitors must remain at least six feet from the resident and each other at all times;**
- **Visitors must be masked at all times;**
- **Residents must be masked unless their attending medical care provider indicates in writing that masking is clinically contraindicated, in which case a barrier (e.g., Plexiglas) of at least six feet wide and six feet high must be placed between the resident and visitors;**
- **Visitation cannot involve any person – resident or visitor – currently under quarantine or isolation restrictions; and**
- **The facility must screen each visitor for symptoms of COVID-19 prior to the start of each visitation experience.**

**This order continues to allow an exception for indoor compassion visitation of residents at the end of life. Further, any persons making compassion visits to residents of these facilities shall be required to wear a mask or other face covering at all times while in the facility. Further, it is very strongly recommended that all such facilities adopt policies requiring all workers, contractors, delivery personnel, and others who might enter the facility for purpose of conducting business at the facility to wear masks or other face coverings while in the facility.**

**This Order shall be in effect in Yellowstone County until rescinded or modified by the Health Officer and is subject to the requirements for operations set forth by the Public Health Department for businesses and individuals any other Order, Directive or Guideline deemed necessary by the Public Health Officer.**

  
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JOHN FELTON  
HEALTH OFFICER FOR CITY-COUNTY OF YELLOWSTONE, MONTANA