



News Release:

For immediate release:

October 14, 2020

Amended Yellowstone County Health Officer Order

Billings, MT – Yellowstone County Health Officer John Felton has amended the Health Officer Order that took effect today to revise the occupancy limit on houses of worship. The amended Order permits houses of worship to exceed the 25-person limit on gatherings if the facility doesn't exceed 75% of capacity and follows both physical distancing and masking requirements.

The original Order, issued on October 12, stated that houses of worship should limit gatherings to 50% of facility capacity. All other aspects of the Health Officer Order issued October 12 remain in effect through midnight on November 9.

The Order has generated numerous questions in the past two days, so RiverStone Health is posting Frequently Asked Questions and answers at RiverStoneHealth.org.

Felton issued the Order after consultation with the Yellowstone County Attorney's Office and the Unified Health Command Medical Technical team, which includes infectious disease and public health experts from Billings Clinic, St. Vincent Healthcare and RiverStone Health.

Yellowstone County's daily average of new cases has doubled since mid-September. On Wednesday, October 14, Yellowstone County reported 81 new cases and three deaths. As of Wednesday, 1,565 Yellowstone County residents were currently infected and 77 had died. Statewide, 225 people have died and 7,917 Montanans had active COVID-19 cases on Wednesday.

In recent days, Billings area doctors, nurses, public health and business leaders have implored all community members to do their part to slow the spread of this deadly virus. The city of Billings has closed the public library building until November 9 and the Yellowstone County Commission has cancelled events at MetraPark through November 9, with the exception of elections office operations.

Please take action to protect yourself, your family and neighbors from COVID-19:

- Stay home if you are sick.
- Work from home if possible.

- Maintain a distance of at least six feet from people outside your household.
- Try to limit your interactions with people outside your household to fewer than six people per week.
- Wear a mask when you are with people outside your household.
- Wash your hands often.

If everyone consistently takes these precautions, we can reduce the spread, save lives, avoid hospitalizations, and keep our schools and businesses open.

Thanks to everyone in Yellowstone County who is abiding by the Health Officer Order and statewide directives for reducing the risk of COVID-19 transmission.

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