



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Stay Healthy. Stay Informed.

Clear Creek Emergency Response Team Prepares for Phased County Re-Opening

Georgetown, CO, April 26, 2020 — Across Colorado, the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases and related deaths continues to climb, but at a slower pace than over the past two months. Therefore, the Governor has announced replacing the statewide Stay at Home Order with a Safer at Home Order starting April 27. Each county and municipality can issue their own guidance equal to or more stringent than State Orders.

Clear Creek County leadership has decided to proceed with a phased re-opening of County offices starting on May 4, with many associated requirements such as social distancing and use of personal protective equipment (PPE). Clear Creek has unique geographic and socioeconomic conditions to consider in re-opening. As the first county on the I-70 corridor west of the Denver metro area, we are the gateway to the mountains. We are a small rural county whose economy is dependent on tourism and outdoor activity. Outdoor recreation incidents and traffic issues on I-70 require Clear Creek County Emergency Medical Services, Fire, and Law Enforcement Officers to be first on the scene, responding to a myriad of issues often involving visitors from other parts of the State, the country, and the world. Today, providing those services adds a higher level of risk for exposure to COVID-19. In addition, Clear Creek has an extremely high at-risk population with 40% of County residents over the age of 60.

The County's Unified Command/Emergency Operations Center (UC/EOC) leaders, Sheriff Rick Albers, PEHD Director Cindy Dicken, and Office of Emergency Management Director, Suzanne Boccia, explain, "We are acutely aware of all levels of impact from the COVID-19 pandemic—physical, emotional and economic conditions for the individual and families. We all want to get back to some semblance of regular life, but while allowing for economic recovery to begin, it is imperative to implement public health safety measures that protect everyone. Managing response to the COVID-19 public health crisis is our top priority; however, it is important to realize that all our team members have other job responsibilities with the County."

CASE NUMBERS IN CLEAR CREEK COUNTY

As of Thursday, April 24, the County Public and Environmental Health Department (PEHD) reported 13 confirmed positive cases in Clear Creek County; seven have been confirmed by valid COVID-19 testing and six are presumptive positive cases, meaning they exhibited symptoms and had close contact with confirmed cases. All are being monitored by the County PHED.

Unfortunately, the previously reported Clear Creek County resident who was hospitalized with COVID-19 has died. This person was outside of Clear Creek County at their time of death. Because the COVID-19 virus is still widespread and many people are contagious without exhibiting symptoms, it remains imperative for all ages to continue to practice social distancing and adhere to all personal protection guidelines as outlined in the Governor's Orders.

TESTING AND CASE MANAGEMENT

If you are a resident of Clear Creek County and are experiencing COVID-19 related symptoms, such as cough, fever, or shortness of breath, please call the Public Health Nurse at 303-670-7545 to schedule a screening and to determine if you are eligible to receive a COVID-19 test. Appointments are held on Tuesdays from 9am to 1pm at the Clear Creek Resource Center. Testing is only for those individuals who are actively exhibiting symptoms. For other COVID-19 health-related questions, call the County COVID-19 Health Line at 303-670-7528.

According to Charlotte Hampson, County Environmental Health Specialist and emergency response team member, "With the ongoing nation-wide shortage of valid test kits, we were fortunate to procure 100 valid kits to test those in our community who are actively showing symptoms of COVID-19. The type of tests we received utilize PCR technology to identify the active virus, not antibodies. This type of test detects the presence of the COVID-19 virus, but is not useful in determining past exposure in fully recovered patients." After a sample is collected by the County Public Health Nurse it is couriered to the State lab for analysis.

In addition, if you are experiencing or have recently experienced the onset of COVID-19 related symptoms, please complete the Self-Reporting Form on the County website/COVID-19 page at <http://www.clearcreekcounty.us> All personal information will remain confidential and will be HIPAA-protected. Obtaining this self-reported information is critical for our public health agency to track the spread of the disease, understand health outcomes for residents, support local agency requests for additional resources, and help our emergency response team make informed decisions to protect the Clear Creek community.

CONTINUED EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLANNING

In order to advance efforts to test on a county-wide basis, trace contacts of those that test positive, and re-open our County in a manner that is safe for all of our residents, Clear Creek County has submitted a Community Test Site Survey to the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE). If approved as a viable test site, PCR kits (nose swabs and other supplies) will be provided by CDPHE to Clear Creek County to offer community-wide testing. Accordingly, a Points of Distribution (POD) Plan is being finalized.

Since its formation in early March, the County's emergency response team's primary goals have been to ensure proper community safeguards are in place and that sound, fact-based decisions and response actions are made. The team continues to meet virtually multiple times each day to report efforts, re-assess community needs and respond accordingly. The UC/EOC objectives are:

- assuring adherence to State and County social distancing guidelines, closures and Orders
- public health testing and monitoring

- volunteer coordination and food management for the most at-risk in our community
- acquiring personal protective equipment (PPE)
- public messaging of these efforts

To guide long-term recovery plans, the County is forming an Economic Recovery Task Force and a Policy Task Force. To keep you informed and receive community feedback, the County Commissioners are holding virtual meetings on Tuesdays at 9am, with COVID-19 Updates by the emergency response team at 11am. Connection information will be provided. Please visit the county website <http://www.clearcreekcounty.us> for additional information on county services and the COVID-19 Emergency Response.

This an unprecedented emergency situation and Clear Creek is an exceptionally resilient community. Please continue do your part to minimize the spread of COVID-19 by only leaving your residence for essential services, and when you do go out into public spaces, social distance and wear appropriate personal protective equipment. Stay healthy, stay informed, and stay the course, Clear Creek.

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