

PLATTE HEALTH OFFICER PUBLIC HEALTH VARIANCE #1

**COUNTYWIDE VARIANCE TO THE RESTRICTIONS MANDATED IN
STATEWIDE PUBLIC HEALTH ORDER #2: FORBIDDING
GATHERINGS OF TEN (10) PEOPLE OR MORE.**

WHEREAS, Dr. Steve Peasley, MD, serves as the Platte County Health Officer pursuant to Wyoming Statute § 35-1-306(a); and

WHEREAS, Wyoming Statute § 35-1-240(a)(i), (ii) and (iv) gives the power to the Wyoming Department of Health, through the State Health Officer, or under her direction and supervision, or through the other employees of the Wyoming Department of Health to control the causes of communicable disease; to close theaters, schools, and other public places; and to forbid gatherings of people when necessary to protect public health; and

WHEREAS, as evidenced by her signature below, Alexia Harrist, MD, Ph.D., the Wyoming State Health Officer, has reviewed and does hereby authorize the issuance of this Variance Order by Dr. Steve Peasley, the Platte County Health Officer, and the State Health Officer, Dr. Alexia Harrist, also specifically makes the finding that this Order is necessary for the protection of the public health; and

WHEREAS, the State Health Officer has issued Statewide Order #2 dealing with gatherings; and

WHEREAS, Statewide Order #2 is specifically titled: *Third Continuation and Modification, of Statewide Public Health Order #2: Forbidding Gatherings of Ten (10) People or More*. Statewide Order #2 originally was to expire on April 3, 2020, however, it was extended by the First Continuation Order to April 17, 2020. The Second Continuation Order extended Statewide Order #2 to April 30, 2020. The Third Continuation Order now extends the order until May 15, 2020, and allows for a County Health Officer to request a less restrictive or more restrictive variance to the order; and

WHEREAS, COVID-19 was first detected in Wuhan, China in 2019, and since then has spread to over 60 countries including the United States.; and

WHEREAS, 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; and

WHEREAS, the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a worldwide pandemic as of March 11, 2020; and

WHEREAS, 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-Co V-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;” and

WHEREAS, on March 13, 2020, Wyoming Governor Mark Gordon declared a State of Emergency and Public Health Emergency in the State of Wyoming, and the State of Wyoming is experiencing a public health emergency in response to the evolving COVID-19 outbreak; and

WHEREAS, 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; and

WHEREAS, 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, and even asymptomatic people, place other vulnerable members of the public at significant risk; and

WHEREAS, a large number of persons with serious infections can compromise the ability of the healthcare system to deliver the necessary healthcare to the public; and

WHEREAS, in addition to the above findings, stopping the spread of COVID-19 includes washing hands often, practicing physical 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 faces, eyes, nose, and mouth, covering your cough or sneeze into your elbow or by using a tissue, and wearing a face covering in public; and

WHEREAS, as of April 30, 2019, there have been no laboratory-confirmed or probable cases of COVID-19 in Platte County;

WHEREAS Banner Hospital and Banner Medical Clinic have an adequate supply of viral transport media and swabs to test symptomatic patients if there were an increased demand for testing; with additional testing supplies available from Platte County Public Health Nursing.

WHEREAS Banner Hospital and Banner Medical Clinic have an adequate supply of PPE available in the event of an increased incidence of positive cases. Platte County Public Health has additional PPE supplies if needed.

NOW THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED THAT residents of Platte County shall comply with Statewide Order #2 (*Third Continuation and Modification, of Statewide Public Health Order #2: Forbidding Gatherings of Ten (10) People or More*) with the following exceptions:

- 1. Religious organizations may allow gatherings subject to the following provisions to be enforced by religious organization leaders:**
 - a. A 6-foot distance must be maintained between individual household groups at all times; and**
 - b. The number of people in a confined area at any time must be limited to allow for adequate distancing between households; and**
 - c. Close contact between members of different households is prohibited before, during, and after the meeting or service; and**
 - d. Reading materials, collection plates, and communion trays must be passed out to individual attendees by staff rather than passed between attendees; and**
 - e. Religious organization leaders and staff shall be screened for symptoms of COVID-19 or exposure to a person with confirmed COVID-19 during the previous 14 days. Staff with symptoms of illness or known exposure to a person with COVID-19 infection within the previous 14 days shall not participate in the service; and**
 - f. Buildings shall be cleaned thoroughly including all high touch areas before and after each service, done according to CDC guidelines for cleaning; and**
 - g. Communion shall be served in individual containers. If containers are not available for the communion item, assigned individuals may place the item into an attendees hands only after appropriate hand washing has been completed and while wearing gloves and a mask.**
 - h. There shall be no exchange of food or drink;**

- i. Staff who come within 6 feet of attendees must wear a face covering; and
- j. In addition to the provisions above, religious organizations are encouraged to implement the following measures to prevent COVID-19 transmission:
 - i. Organizations should offer the ability to watch or listen to the meeting or service from home, if organization has that ability; and
 - ii. Hand sanitizer should be provided at the door for people to use upon entrance and exit from the building; and
 - iii. Individuals participating in the meeting or service should be informed on maintaining proper hand hygiene, avoiding touching their face, eyes, nose and mouth, and covering coughs and sneezes.
 - iv. Individuals participating in the meeting or service should be informed to stay home if they are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 or have had known close contact with an individual with COVID-19 within the last 14 days;
 - v. Individuals should be encouraged to wear a face covering throughout the service. Religious organization leader(s) speaking to the group do not need to wear a face while addressing the individuals present but must maintain a 6 foot distance from others; and;
 - vi. High risk individuals and those who live or work with high-risk individuals should be encouraged to stay home. High risk individuals are those aged 65 and older, are immunocompromised, or have other health factors as identified by the CDC that increase risk of becoming seriously ill if exposed to COVID-19. Organizations should designate areas inside the facility reserved for high-risk individuals or offer a service for high-risk individuals only.

2. Funeral homes may allow gatherings subject to the following provisions to be enforced by funeral home staff:

- a. A 6-foot distance must be maintained between individual household groups at all times; and
- b. The number of people in a confined area at any time must be limited to allow for adequate distancing between households; and
- c. Close contact between members of different households is prohibited before, during, and after the meeting or service; and
- d. Funeral home staff shall be screened for symptoms of COVID-19 or exposure to a person with confirmed COVID-19 during the previous 14 days. Staff with symptoms of illness or known exposure to a person with COVID-19 infection within the previous 14 days shall not participate in the service; and
- e. Buildings shall be cleaned thoroughly including all high touch areas before and after each service, done according to CDC guidelines for cleaning; and

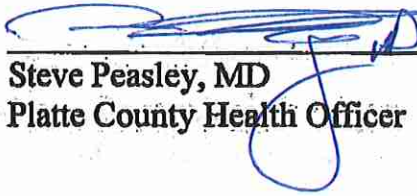
- f. There shall be no exchange of food or drink; and
- g. Staff who come within 6 feet of attendees must wear a face covering; and
- h. In addition to the provisions above, funeral homes are encouraged to implement the following measures to prevent COVID-19 transmission:
 - i. Hand sanitizer should be provided at the door for people to use upon entrance and exit from the building; and
 - ii. Individuals participating in the meeting or service should be informed on maintaining proper hand hygiene, avoiding touching their face, eyes, nose and mouth, and covering coughs and sneezes; and
 - iii. Individuals participating in the meeting or service should be informed to stay home if they are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 or have had known close contact with an individual with COVID-19 within the last 14 days; and
 - iv. Individuals should be encouraged to wear a face covering throughout the service. Speakers addressing the group do not need to wear a face covering while addressing the individuals present but must maintain a 6 foot distance from others; and
 - v. High risk individuals and those who live or work with high-risk individuals should be encouraged to stay home. High risk individuals are those aged 65 and older, are immunocompromised, or have other health factors as identified by the CDC that increase risk of becoming seriously ill if exposed to COVID-19. Organizations should designate areas inside the facility reserved for high-risk individuals or offer a service for high-risk individuals only; and

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED, that the Platte County Health Officer may grant exceptions to the Order on a case by case basis after evaluating the request and obtaining written approval from the State Health Officer; and

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED, that this Countywide Variance to the Statewide Public Health Order #2 shall remain in effect until such time as the Platte County Health Officer enters a decision to revoke or modify this variance, under the direction and supervision of the State Health Officer; and

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED, that any person or legal entity that violates this variance shall be subject to criminal prosecution under Wyo. Stat. Ann. §§ 35-1-105 and -106; and

DATED THIS 4th DAY OF May, 2020.



Steve Peasley, MD
Platte County Health Officer

Direction to Issue Variance

I, Dr. Alexia Harrist, the Wyoming State Health Officer, hereby state that I have reviewed the above variance and hereby direct, pursuant to Wyoming Statutes §§ 35-1-227 and -240(a)(i) and (iv), the Platte Health Officer to issue the above variance allowing all religious or church organizations in Platte County, Wyoming to open with restrictions as described. As the State Health Officer, I specifically deem this variance appropriate for Platte County, WY. I will reassess the necessity of this variance as appropriate to do so and according to accepted epidemiological and medical standards.



Dr. Alexia Harrist
Wyoming State Health Officer