

## **Boulder County Extending Current Stay-at-Home Order Through May 8 (Letter from Executive Director, Boulder County Public Health)**

Boulder County Public Health (BCPH) is awaiting clear guidance from Governor Polis about how his “Safer-at-Home” Order will be implemented on April 27, 2020. The success of a Safer-at-Home Order is dependent on nearly 100% community compliance with requirements of social distancing and masking in businesses and public places. The goal is to avoid a surge of COVID-19 cases that would overwhelm our hospital system.

Without implementation of effective guidance and coaching, an adequate compliance level will not be realistic, and we may see an uptick in cases. What we certainly want to avoid is relaxing restrictions, only later needing to reimpose them if there’s a surge in cases that results in higher levels of illness, potentially increased fatalities, and a lengthier recovery period for the community.

BCPH is therefore extending Governor Polis’s current “Stay-at-Home” Order through May 8, 2020. BCPH has, however, revised the extended order to now allow non-critical businesses to also conduct curbside pickup and delivery. Otherwise, the status quo of the current Stay-at-Home Order remains intact. ***With respect to the allowance of curbside delivery beginning April 27, 2020, the extended Stay-at-Home Order in Boulder County is consistent with the Governor’s plan for Safer-at-Home. By extending the Stay-at-Home Order through May 8, business activities that might otherwise be permitted by Safer-at-Home are delayed by 4-7 days.***

This time-limited extension will enable BCPH to provide effective guidance and coaching to a wide range of businesses, community members, and other key stakeholders, as described below. We will also be able to achieve improvements in critical indicators for treating COVID-19 cases as follows:

- 1. Boulder County will have a new facility designed to handle surge from hospitals:**
  - Extending the current Stay-at-Home Order through May 8 puts us closer to completion of a “Tier 2.5” facility that can serve people discharged from hospitals who still require acute care services. This State facility will be located at St Anthony’s North; it is slated for completion on May 15 and will have a capacity of roughly 86 beds.
- 2. Local businesses will receive improved education, coaching, and training:**
  - We will deliver clearer guidance with input from the business community that will help to increase compliance and minimize confusion in the community.
  - We will collaborate with industry partners on development of an online certification system to enable businesses to confidently demonstrate to the community their compliance with COVID-19-related regulations and guidance.
  - We will develop clear guidance to community residents and visitors to minimize confusion and non-compliance.
  - We will better coordinate with community/business partners, such as Chambers of Commerce, to obtain their input and support co-ownership of the guidance about the

easing of restrictions as we move into a recovery phase. The Chambers can help to facilitate meetings with the business community and economic development partners and help us to address equity concerns.

**3. An extension will support the development and implementation of equity-focused strategies:**

- We know that the Latinx population makes up 28% of all COVID-19 cases, which is double the percentage of their population within our community. Over one-third of all people hospitalized are Latinx, which is more than triple their percentage of the Boulder County population. The Community Foundation of Boulder County has committed to working with Boulder County Public Health and Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) to consider funding strategies that respond to the needs of the Latinx community in the recovery phase of this pandemic.

**4. Insufficient testing capabilities:**

- A key component to support lifting stay-at-home restrictions is the ability for testing to be performed for all people with symptoms consistent with COVID-19 infection. By May 8, BCPH will have very likely completed a capacity assessment of hospitals, long-term care facilities, and federally qualified health centers (FQHC) and have a plan in place for more systematic testing of priority populations. This week, BCPH received positive updates about the future availability of testing supplies:
  - On Wednesday, April 22, Governor Polis announced 150,000 COVID-19 tests will be arriving in Colorado by the end of the week.
  - The State also expects to receive an additional 150,000 swabs by mid-May.
  - The State is working with the Gary Community Foundation to deploy hundreds of thousands of antibody tests to better understand disease surveillance and exposure.
  - This is in addition to the State's partnership with Colorado State University (CSU) to expand testing for workers at skilled nursing facilities.

**5. BCPH requires additional time to establish containment, surveillance, and monitoring of active cases:**

- Case investigation and contact tracing are scientifically proven methods for managing the spread of disease. Case investigation paired with contact tracing have helped the public health community prevent the spread of other diseases, such as TB, Ebola, and SARS.
- The Boulder County Epidemiology (Epi) Team is currently operating with 16 case investigators to conduct investigations, contact tracing, and outbreak investigations. An additional 4 FTE are currently being trained to perform those duties. By May 8, the Epi Team is expected to be fully operational, given current case projections.

**6. PPE will be more readily available:**

- Non-emergency supply chains are coming back online. Boulder County's Emergency Operations Center (EOC) has placed orders and is filling all surgical mask, KN95 mask, and glove requests. Shipments from China are slated to be received 2-3 weeks from now.

I am attaching a copy of the extended stay-at-home order for your information, as well as this link to the press release announcing the extension: <https://www.bouldercounty.org/news/boulder-county-extends-stay-at-home-order-through-may-8/> Please feel free to distribute this information, as appropriate.