

# NEWS

## For Immediate Release

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## **Central District Health and group of Boise bar owners discuss recent COVID-19 cluster and measures to help slow the spread to keep businesses open**

*Public urged to wear masks in social settings*

**BOISE, ID** - Today, Central District Health and more than 10 bar owners and operators from Boise's downtown, held a virtual meeting to discuss the recent COVID-19 illness cluster and ways to slow the spread of the virus to keep businesses open and our community healthy.

During the meeting, CDH shared information on the illness cluster that now includes 69 people, many who exposed other members of the public by going to a number of bars and nightclubs while they were infectious.

Positive cases within a business, regardless of industry, do not indicate wrong-doing on behalf of the business. Given significant community transmission of COVID-19, people can become exposed to and transmit the virus to others in any setting.

CDH and bar owners discussed the gravity of this illness cluster and its potential to impact a broader, more vulnerable population of our community, reviewed operational guidance for bars created by the State, and discussed ideas on how to slow the spread and work toward a solution that keeps people healthy and businesses open.

Among the ideas discussed and agreed to:

- Staff will consistently wear face coverings
- Customers will be asked to wear a face covering

- Physical distancing and occupancy restrictions will be in place
- CDH and bar owners will work to educate the public on responsible socializing amidst COVID-19
- CDH will offer establishments an on-site technical review of operational plans for increased safety and sanitation

"We recognize that wearing a face covering might not be the preferred thing to do when you're out socializing, but nothing related to this global pandemic which stands to become very serious in our community, is comfortable or easy," said Russ Duke, District Director for CDH. "We want to keep people healthy, ensure our hospitals don't become overwhelmed, and keep our businesses open so that they can begin thriving again. To do this, we all need to make some sacrifices. Wearing a face covering in public and respecting any guidelines in place by a business are simple, low-or no-cost sacrifices that we can all do today and every day," added Duke.

"On behalf of our beloved clientele, staff and the public at large, we'd like to thank Central District Health for working with those of us in the bar and entertainment industry in Boise in order to find ways forward during these challenging times. After three months of a shutdown, the most difficult route would be to face another closure of our vital and important industry. As a result of our cooperative efforts with CDH, we'd like remind everyone that since this is a serious problem we all need to collectively address, and as humans we will always be social beings, nobody knows how to put on a party for a cause like we do. So we are looking forward to creating a Downtown Boise "Mask-er-Rade"! Stayed tuned for further details, but rest assured there will be rewards for all patrons wearing masks, including the most creative and the most mundane; plus, you will be able to safely party while being socially responsible! More news on that to follow," said Rocci Johnson, co-owner of Humpin' Hannah's in Downtown Boise

CDH and the bar owners agreed to implement the measures discussed today as soon as possible, however some, such as providing face coverings for customers who do not have one, may take some additional time to put in place. Central District Health will continue to monitor this illness cluster.

**State Guidance for Bars:**

<https://www.cdhd.idaho.gov/pdfs/cd/Coronavirus/Resource%20Docs/businesses/stage4-protocols-bars-breweries-wineries-distilleries-nightclubs.pdf>

**CDC Guidance for Bars:**

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/business-employers/bars-restaurants.html>

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