

NEWS

For Immediate Release

February 19, 2021

Central District Board of Health lifts public health order for Ada County, mask order for Valley County

Revised Public Health Advisory emphasizes need for continued COVID-19 health and safety measures in Ada, Boise, Elmore, and Valley Counties

Ada County, ID — At their regular business meeting today, February 19, 2021, the Central District Board of Health voted unanimously to lift the public health order for Ada County and the mask order in Valley County – both have been in place since last summer.

Today's decision to lift the two orders was prompted by a steady decline in case counts in recent weeks and reduced impacts on hospitals across Central District Health's (CDH) jurisdiction of Ada, Boise, Elmore, and Valley Counties, when compared to previous months.

During their discussion, two board members emphasized the need to continue practicing COVID-19 safety measures such as wearing a mask, keeping six feet of distance from those outside of our households, avoiding large gatherings, and washing our hands frequently.

Safety and health measures continue with revised district-wide Public Health Advisory

While orders for Ada and Valley County have been lifted, CDH District Director, Russ Duke shared a revised version of the four-county Public Health Advisory that was first issued on November 17, 2020. The advisory replaces the previous version and takes effect immediately. Though similar in health and safety guidance, the advisory is not an order but includes strong recommendations for individuals and businesses around personal behaviors and operations. It serves to advise communities on current conditions and ways to protect the health and safety of our community. The advisory also aims to support our hospitals so they can continue to provide appropriate levels of care to COVID and non-COVID patients.

"While we are starting to make some progress on vaccinating our most vulnerable population of those 65 years and older, we have a ways to go. A small fraction of these individuals have had an opportunity to receive their first dose which means a significant number of people who are statistically more vulnerable, still need the community's support. We want the updated advisory to be our community's ongoing

commitment to practice measures that will allow our data to continue on a downward trend," said Russ Duke, District Director for CDH.

Changes to the advisory include:

- An emphasized need to protect residents who are 65+ who have not yet had the chance to receive vaccine, or have only received one dose
- A more specific definition of appropriate and effective mask-wearing and added exceptions to mask-wearing
- More specific guidance for indoor gatherings
- Updated guidance for those participating in any sporting/community/extra-curricular activities to include wearing face coverings and keeping physical distancing
- More detailed guidance for workplaces
- Added recommendation to get the COVID-19 vaccine whenever it is your turn to get it
- Removal of section related to outings/activities/places of worship

View the full advisory at <https://www.cdh.idaho.gov/covid-advisory.php>

"We want to remind our communities that all four counties continue to see community spread which means there is enough virus circulating, making it often impossible to determine where or how someone was exposed. This puts all of us at higher risk. With people continuing to make good choices, we will all benefit," said Duke.

Duration of the advisory

Changes to a public health advisory are at the discretion of the district director. The updated advisory will remain in place until the 65 years and older population has had the opportunity to receive both doses of COVID-19 vaccine, plus two weeks to ensure they receive the best protection, and the two-week average daily case rate remains less than 30 cases per 100,000 population.

If any of the three major health systems report to the state that they are functioning under severe constraints because of COVID-19 patient volume, the board of health may consider public health orders to slow the spread of SARS-CoV-2.

The face covering and physical distancing recommendation will remain in effect until the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) directs that other pandemic control measures allow discontinuation of these measures.

Order background

CDH's Board of Health enacted the Ada County order on June 24, 2020, in response to increasing COVID-19 case counts and growing demands on area hospitals. It aimed to protect our community's most vulnerable population and preserve healthcare resources for both COVID and non-COVID needs. The order included specific restrictions on gathering sizes, that face coverings be worn, and outlined other health and safety measures.

The Board modified the orders in September 2020 to allow Ada County bars to reopen and operate under specific conditions; additional updates were made in October 2020 to allow for visits to long-term care facilities to occur under outlined regulations.

The Valley County mask order was enacted on August 11, 2020, in response to a request made to CDH by Valley County Commissioners.

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**For more information about COVID-19, visit
<https://www.cdh.idaho.gov/covid>
or call the CDH Call Center at 208-321-2222, Monday through Friday
between 8:30 am and 4:30 pm**

(Note: The call center may be closed or operate with limited hours – 8:30 am to 12:30 pm on most holidays.)

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