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MEDIA RELEASE

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NEW COVID Dial Position Per New Metrics in Dial 2 However the Pandemic Persists

In a surprising turn of events on January 5th, and with the announcement of the new metrics for Dial 2 from the Governor's office, Kit Carson County has been moved into the "Blue" Level (Cautious) of the Dial effective Saturday, February 6th. While we have seen decreasing incidence and positivity rates in the month of January, health officials were expecting a move to Yellow instead.

This is news we all were hoping for over the last several months, however, there continues to be positive COVID cases in the County, and caution still must be maintained. From February 1st through February 9th, 109 people tested and 13 were positive which equates to a 12% positivity rate. In the last two weeks during the period of January 26 – February 9, 155 people were tested and 18 were positive which also equaled a 12% positivity rate. Our Cumulative Incidence Rate for the first full week of February is 182:100,000. With these numbers, Level Blue may need to be reconsidered if they continue to persist or go up and appear to pose a threat to public safety.

Level Blue does not mean "all clear"

Unfortunately, when the news was shared that the County went to "Blue", there was a misconception that this somehow equated to an "all clear", that we could assume our lives as if everything was now over and that the indoor mask order from the Governor's office no longer pertains to our County. Neither of these are true. We remain in a pandemic and caution still must be applied in order for us to continue on a positive path to recovery.

Since we are now Blue, Kit Carson County can have 175 spectators at indoor youth sporting events. The following are the new guidelines Kit Carson County will be operating under in Dial Level Blue:

1. **Public and private gatherings** are limited to no more than 25 individuals when not otherwise regulated as a specific sector or activity in Section III of the Public Health Order. Individuals at risk of severe illness from COVID-19 are advised to continue to use extreme caution when leaving home.
2. **Non-Critical Office-based Businesses** may allow in-person work up to 50% of their posted occupancy limit.

3. **Non-critical Manufacturing** may operate at 50% of the posted occupancy limit up to 175 employees, whichever is less, per room.
4. **Field Services** may operate, and real estate open houses must follow the indoor event requirements, including capacity limits.
5. **Personal Services** may operate at 50% of the posted occupancy limit, not to exceed 50 people, whichever is less, per room.
6. **Limited Healthcare Settings** may operate at 50% of the posted occupancy limit, not to exceed 50 people, whichever is less, per room.
7. **Restaurants** may operate at 50% of the posted occupancy limit indoors not to exceed 175 people excluding staff, whichever is less, per room. Restaurants may also use any existing, licensed outdoor space for in-person dining with the same group limit of 10 and minimum spacing of 6 feet apart.
8. **Indoor Events** may be conducted at **50% of the posted occupancy limit** *not to exceed 175 people, whichever is less*, per room excluding staff.
9. **Outdoor Events** may operate at 50% of the posted occupancy limit not to exceed 250 people per designated activity or area, whichever is less.
10. **Recreation**, including gyms, recreation centers and indoor pools and outdoor recreation facilities, may open at 50% capacity, not to exceed 175 people, whichever is less, excluding staff per room indoors or per activity or area outdoors.
11. **Organized recreational youth or adult leagues sports** may resume activities with no more than 50 players, excluding coaching staff and referees or umpires.
12. **Critical Businesses and Critical Government Functions** may continue to operate without capacity limitations, except that Critical Retail must adhere to 50% of the posted occupancy limit.

Kit Carson County Health officials are cautiously pleased with these new guidelines and hope that the incidence and positivity rates in the County continue to allow us to be in the Blue Level on the Dial. If everyone continues to do their part to stay at home when not feeling well, getting tested for COVID if you have symptoms of the virus, wash hands frequently and wear a mask indoors when it is not possible to remain 6 feet apart, we should be able to maintain our path to recovery and COVID control.

COVID Vaccine

When it is your turn, please also consider getting the COVID vaccine to build county herd immunity and stop COVID from its continued spread. Vaccinations are available to all individuals born in 1956 or earlier, or who are employed in a school, or are frontline healthcare workers. COVID Vaccine Clinics are available weekly on Wednesday and Friday at the health department located at 252 South 14th Street and on Thursdays at the Kit Carson County Memorial Hospital located at 286 16th Street. Vaccines are available by registration only. Please sign up for your shot on line at <https://novelhealth.ai/practice/kit-carson-county-dept.-of-public-health-and-environment-301981> or call 719 346-7158, ext. 342.

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