



## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **KIT CARSON COUNTY COVID-19 RESPONSE WEEKLY UPDATE FOR WEEK 8**

To date, 158 people in Kit Carson County have been tested for COVID-19. 21 of those were from other counties. Of those people tested who live in Kit Carson County, there have been 25 positive cases and 133 have been negative. 22 of those tested positive have been related to the outbreak at Grace Manor Care Center. There have been no new cases of COVID among the residents at the nursing home for 21 days and the outbreak is considered to be resolved at 28 days. Until now, all of the positive cases have been from the Burlington and Bethune area, however, there are now 2 positive cases in Flagler. These two cases are individuals from the same household.

Currently, 10 people remain in isolation (those who tested positive) and none are hospitalized. Thirteen people have recovered and have been released from isolation, and two passed away from GMCC. There are also 3 people who remain in quarantine as a result of being exposed to someone close to them who tested positive. If we include the GMCC cases, our positive rate is 15%. If we exclude the GMCC cases, our countywide positive rate of those who have been tested is 4%.

A drive through mass testing site was conducted on May 6<sup>th</sup> in Burlington, Stratton and Flagler. 48 people took advantage of the testing opportunity. 21 people tested were from other counties. Of the 26 who were from Kit Carson County, one was positive with a positivity rate of 3% for the day. Kit Carson County Department of Public Health and Environment is a recognized State testing site, and we are conducting weekly COVID testing clinics every Friday from 9:00 to 4:00 p.m. No physician order is required and there is no charge for the test. It is highly recommended that individuals schedule the test so staff will know you are coming. To schedule a Friday test, call 719-346-7158 and ask for Tammy or Denise. Doing more testing will help public health officials determine how much COVID-19 is actually circulating in the County.

## **Kit Carson County Recovery/Opening Plan for COVID-19 Continues to Be Pursued by County Officials**

Kit Carson County Public Health and the Kit Carson County Board of Health issued guidance this week to all restaurants and churches in the County regarding how to re-open while maintaining the “safer at home” orders that have been issued by the Governor and the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment. The purpose of the plan that was developed by the local Board of Health is to ensure sustaining a decrease of COVID-19 virus in an incremental fashion that slowly lifts restrictions, prevents a resurgence of disease in the community, and allows our community to begin social and economic recovery. The Board of County Commissioners requested a variance from the current Public Health Order three weeks ago. The variance would allow local decision-making regarding how and when to relax Executive Orders that have been issued by Governor Polis. Should the variance be approved, additional re-opening will occur that isn't currently allowable under Executive Order D 2020 044. It is unclear when the variance will be granted, but the process is well underway with a goal of having one by May 15<sup>th</sup>. Social Distancing Protocols have now been delivered to all businesses, churches and restaurants. If you did not receive a business re-start packet or reopening letter and restart protocol, please contact the health department at 719-346-7158, ext. 116 and we will email a copy of the packet to you, or you can download it from the Kit Carson County Webpage.

Kit Carson County Public Health Officials are aware of the need for the remaining restaurants and churches to reopen with necessary protections in place. They are working diligently to get everyone back to work in order to get our local economy back on track while protecting the public's health. All businesses should be conducting Social Distancing protocols that help us keep COVID-19 at or below 5%. This will assure us that we won't have to repeat Stay at Home Orders or see a resurgence of the virus in Kit Carson County. Everyone's cooperation – business owners as well as community members - is needed to help make this happen. COVID-19 remains a threat to our health. It will persist until a vaccine is available. If you have any question regarding the plans, protocols and process, please call Dawn James, Public Health Director at 719-346-7158, ext. 116.

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