



COLORADO

Department of Public
Health & Environment

May 12, 2020

Jerry Casebolt, Logan County Emergency Manager via email loganoem@logancountyco.gov
Trish McClain, Northeast Public Health Director via email trishm@nchd.org

RE: Application for Variance from Public Health Order 20-28 Safer at Home

Dear Mr. Casebolt:

Thank you for your recent application for a variance from Public Health Order (PHO) 20-28 Safer at Home to the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE). We want to support counties' ability to be less restrictive than the state, in geographic areas where it makes sense. However, our reviewers have some concerns about vulnerabilities in Logan County, and want to monitor the situation before further considering a variance.

As stated in Appendix G to PHO 20-28, when reviewing a variance request, we evaluate the current prevalence of COVID-19 in the jurisdiction, including whether cases are increasing, stable, or decreasing. Logan County has the highest rate of COVID-19 in Colorado, with a three day daily incidence continuing to be high and trending up. There are now over 400 cases in the Department of Corrections Sterling Facilities. While few cases have occurred outside of the Facilities, the plan submitted raises concerns about whether cases will continue to increase in the community due to employee exposure. Additionally, within the submitted plan, one of the data points for determining the success of the variance is less than forty (40) COVID-19 hospitalizations among local hospitals. It is unclear by the information reviewed what forty beds represents in the local health system and what burden that might create.

Based on these concerns, the conditions are not conducive at this time for relaxing any of the Safer at Home restrictions, but we can continue to monitor disease prevalence for a time when it makes more sense from a safety perspective. When feasible, we will require a new letter of support from both the hospitals in your area.

We appreciate the work that you are doing in these difficult times to prevent further spread of disease and we are here to provide technical assistance if you need it. We look forward to working with you as a valued partner in public health.

Sincerely,

Jill Hunsaker Ryan, MPH
Executive Director