



COLORADO
Department of Public
Health & Environment

May 17, 2020

Janelle Kukuk
Mineral County Administrator
mincty@hotmail.com

Tara Hardy
Public Health Director
Silver Thread Public Health District
tara@silverthreadphd.org

RE: Mineral County Variance Request from portions of **Executive Order D 20 044** and **Public Health Order 20-28**

Dear Ms. Kukuk and Ms. Hardy:

Thank you for your application to the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) requesting a variance to portions of **Executive Order D 20 044 Safer at Home** and **Public Health Order 20-28 Safer at Home**. I have had an opportunity to review your request and consider the information provided, and determine that the request is approved, with some amendments, as explained further below.

You asked for variances related to restaurants (PHO 20-28, II.A) and places of worship (PHO 20-28, II.B and Appendix F.5). Your suppression plan addresses particular requirements that you propose as an alternative to the Safer at Home model for both of these areas. The data and information included in your request demonstrates that Mineral County has only had two COVID-19 cases, and only three entries since as of May 5, 2020 have been entered into the Symptom Tracker used by Silver Thread Public Health District (STPHD). Of those entries, one individual was tested based on their symptoms. STPHD can test up to 50 residents with symptoms per day. Specimen test is sent to the state lab for testing, with STPHD being the first point of contact for receiving information on test results and able to initiate contact tracing immediately upon verification of positive results.

As described in the suppression plan, potential COVID-19 patients are seen and initially treated in the Rio Grande Hospital emergency room. Once stabilized, patients are transported by ambulance to San Luis Valley Health Intensive Care COVID unit. Rio Grande Hospital is not hospitalizing patients until needing transitional care. Given that Mineral County residents rely on care outside of the jurisdiction, if there is a growth of COVID-19 cases within the region

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impacting the ability of regional hospitals to continue to offer care, it may be necessary for the current variance to be altered to reduce overall potential of stress on the regional system.

Regarding the suppression plan for reopening restaurants, in addition to the requirements outlined in the plan, the following must also be implemented:

- All employees shall be required to wear face coverings that cover the nose and mouth at all times while working, not just those that are interacting with the public.
- Customers must be asked prior to entering whether they have any symptoms of COVID-19, and any customers reporting symptoms must be excluded.

As noted in your suppression plan, this approval is only for restaurants, bars are not authorized to open.

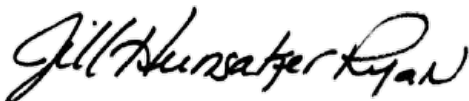
For places of worship, the following additional requirements beyond what is stated in the suppression plan must be met:

- Require six feet distancing between individuals or families.
- Symptomatic employees must be excluded from the place of worship and required to remain in isolation for 10 days, per CDC guidance.
- Employees must wear face coverings that cover the nose and mouth at all times while working.

This variance approval is granted based on the facts and circumstances today as you have described them in your request. If any of the County's triggers of 2 or more cases, 2 or more ongoing outbreak investigations, or 10 or more symptomatic cases being monitored occurs, then this variance is automatically rescinded. Additionally, CDPHE reserves the right to modify or rescind this variance approval as circumstances warrant. This approval is in effect until the final expiration of PHO 20-28, which currently is set to expire on May 26, 2020 but may be extended.

I appreciate your thoughtful approach to these challenging issues, and wish you all the best in your continuing efforts to ensure that Mineral County residents are safe and healthy as we deal with this global pandemic. Mineral County is a valued partner, and we are available to answer any questions and work with you on these matters. Please give me a call if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Jill Hunsaker Ryan, MPH
Executive Director