

**ORDER OF VALLEY COUNTY
BOARD OF HEALTH 2020 - 08**

WHEREAS, the World Health Organization has declared the worldwide outbreak of COVID-19 Novel Coronavirus a pandemic;

WHEREAS, the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS) recognizes COVID-19 as a threat to the residents of Montana, including Valley County;

WHEREAS, the Valley County Board of Health Department through the Valley County Health Officer have taken measures to limit exposure to Valley County residents;

WHEREAS, proactively implementing mitigation and containment measures to slow the spread of the virus is in the best interests of Valley County and its constituents;

WHEREAS, the circumstances of this outbreak may exceed the capacity of the services, personnel, equipment, supplies and facilities of Valley County;

WHEREAS, the County of Valley's Board of Health has the duty to protect the public from the introduction and spread of communicable diseases or other conditions of public health importance, including through actions to ensure the removal of filth or other contaminants that might cause disease or adversely affect public health;

WHEREAS, the Valley County Health Officer has determined that the potential spread of COVID-19 constitutes a public health emergency and actions must be taken to alleviate and minimize the outbreak of this communicable disease;

WHEREAS, pursuant to Section 50-2-118 of the Montana Code Annotated, a local health officer in carrying out the purpose of the public health system, shall take steps to limit contact between people in order to protect the public health from imminent threats, including but not limited to ordering the closure of buildings or facilities where people congregate and cancelling events; and the Valley County Board of Health adopting said steps;

WHEREAS, pursuant to Section 50-2-116(1)(g) of the Montana Code Annotated, local boards of health shall, in order to carry out the purposes of the public health system issue orders necessary to abate, restrain, or prosecute the violation of public health laws, rules, and local regulations;

WHEREAS, as of November 13, 2020, over 10 million cases and 248,000 deaths in the United States are attributed to COVID-19;

WHEREAS, as of November 13, 2020, 44,244 confirmed cases in the State of Montana have resulted in 477 deaths, 492 currently hospitalized patients, and 18,378 active cases. The number of new positive cases in Montana is 1214 persons.

WHEREAS, as of November 13, 2020, the total number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in Valley County has reached 478, with 52 active cases;

WHEREAS, the Valley County Health Department has activated response plans and protocols to prepare for cases of COVID-19 in Valley County;

WHEREAS, the Valley County Health Department has worked to identify, contact, and test individuals in Valley County who may have been exposed to COVID-19 in coordination with the State of Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services and the CDC;

WHEREAS, proactive implementation of mitigation measures to slow the spread of the virus is in the best interest of Valley County residents;

WHEREAS, COVID-19 is a respiratory disease often resulting in serious illness or death and is a new strain of virus not previously identified in humans that is easily spread from host-to-host;

WHEREAS, the CDC identifies the potential public health threat posed by COVID-19 globally and in the United States as “high” and has advised spread will continue to occur;

WHEREAS, the Valley County Health Department and Public Health Officer for Valley County are required by law to take steps to protect the public from the introduction and spread of communicable disease or other conditions of public health importance, including through actions to ensure the abatement of circumstances that may cause disease to adversely affect public health within the County;

WHEREAS, the Public Health Officer has determined the spread of COVID-19 constitutes a public health emergency and actions must be taken to abate and minimize the outbreak of the disease;

WHEREAS, the Governor of the State of Montana, in consultation with public health authorities, has implemented a phased plan for reopening Montana’s private sector (Plan);

WHEREAS, the Plan provided circumstances under which the State of Montana may move toward opening previously closed or restricted businesses, organizations, and workplaces;

WHEREAS, the Plan provides local Health Officers the ability to analyze the spread of COVID-19 within communities and adjust the Plan as may be necessary to address the unique circumstances of individual jurisdictions;

WHEREAS, the current protocols have seemingly been insufficient to slow the spread of COVID-19 in Valley County in any meaningful way, if at all;

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED

Effective at 12:00 a.m. on November 18, 2020 and continuing until January 12, 2021. At this time the Board will reassess said order and either continue, revise, or

revoke based on case incidence trend and local hospital's capacity to admit both COVID-19 and non-COVID-19 patients so that necessary care can be maintained. The following shall be required subject to any noted exceptions contained herein:

- 1. All group physical gatherings, assemblies and events, including but not limited to all business, organizations, clubs, and private gatherings, shall not exceed 50 individuals in attendance, and regardless of whether the ability to socially distance exists or whether such gathering occurs outdoors, shall require face coverings and social distancing, except as follows:**

-Houses of worship may exceed the 50-person cap for gathering, but only up to 75% of the capacity of the facility in which they commune and must still comply with social distancing and face covering requirements.

-Food service establishments serving a population dependent on such food as its soul source of food, including school cafeterias, hospital and care facilities, may continue to operate using only personnel such as is necessary to fulfill the needs of their service.

-Local school districts and affiliated activities (whether academic or extracurricular) shall be governed by the local districts.

-Youth activities shall remain compliant with all directives currently in place by the Governor of Montana.

-Childcare facilities may continue business and operation as currently allowed.

- 2. Pursuant to Section 50-2-124, MCA, upon complaint or discovery and verification of individuals violating this order, individuals may be subject to criminal citation and if convicted, penalized by a fine of not less than \$10 or more than \$200. Further, individuals and entities, upon complaint or discovery and verification of violating this order may be subject to legal action otherwise provided for by Title 50, Part 2 of Montana Code Annotated.**

Dr. Anne Millard Date
HEALTH OFFICER FOR VALLEY COUNTY, MONTANA