



Flathead City-County Health Department

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Flathead County reaching critical levels as COVID-19 cases drastically increase

Kalispell, MT –Flathead County is seeing a dramatic rise in COVID-19 cases, related hospitalizations and deaths. The Flathead City-County Health Department is imploring community members and businesses to immediately follow the necessary steps to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

“Flathead County has reached a critical point in the fight against COVID-19,” says Tamalee St James Robinson, Interim Health Officer of the Flathead City-County Health Department. “We are seeing a surge of new cases and these are putting a strain on our healthcare system as well as our public health investigation team. If we as a community do not step up to take action to prevent the spread of COVID-19 additional control measures will need to be implemented.”

In the last several weeks, COVID-19 cases in Flathead County have increased drastically. Over the past two weeks, 722 new lab confirmed cases were reported. Two additional COVID-19 related deaths of Flathead County individuals were confirmed over the past weekend, bringing the total number of COVID-19 related deaths to twenty one. Furthermore, COVID-19 Capacity Indicators show that Flathead County is functioning at critical levels in four of the seven categories, including case investigation capacity, community concern, and hospitalizations.

Lab confirmed cases continue to increase in our schools as well. Schools in the valley have worked diligently to ensure children are safe in the school setting. During the contact tracing investigations of these cases, FCCHD has determined most student transmission occurred outside of school activities such as cast parties, slumber parties, and birthday parties. “Parents, please be mindful of how you are allowing your children to spend their down time,” says Robinson. “Everyone needs to take small mitigation steps to help keep our schools open.”

The Flathead City-County Health Department asks that the community take the following actions:

- Always follow COVID-19 prevention methods (social distance, wear your mask, stay home if ill and wash your hands)
- Avoid interaction with those outside of your immediate family/social circle
- Do not attend large gatherings
- Utilize alternate ways of seeking services (e.g. take-out, delivery, drive thru)



- Work virtually
- Do not interact with any community members under isolation or quarantine

“We want our businesses and schools to remain open. We have to see a change in the direction COVID-19 is heading in our community. It is up to us all of us to stop the spread.”

Information about the current COVID-19 capacity in Flathead County can be found on the Flathead County Community Indicators web page at <https://maps.flathead.mt.gov/portal/apps/sites/#/applications/pages/flathead-county-covid-19-community-indicators>.

