



Eastern Idaho Public Health

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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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EIPH'S Board Modifies COVID-19 Regional Response Plan; Encourages More Personal Accountability; Madison County Moves to High Risk; Public Health Orders for Required Masking and Event Guidance Still in Place

(SE Idaho) – The Board of Health (BOH) at Eastern Idaho Public Health (EIPH) met this morning (October 8) and made modifications to the COVID-19 Regional Response Plan. When the Plan was developed back in July, the key risk reduction strategies of staying home when sick and monitoring your health, washing hands or using hand sanitizer, maintaining physical distance of at least 6 feet from others, and wearing a face covering when not able to physical distance, were the backbone of the plan. “We believe that if these four mitigation strategies are done consistently, we would see a decrease in cases of COVID-19, less hospitalizations, and ultimately, less deaths. Our concern right now is the increase in hospitalizations that we are experiencing in our region. We want individuals to make choices consistent with public health recommendations to slow the spread of the virus and reverse this concerning trend,” stated Geri Rackow, EIPH Director.

These four strategies will continue to be the basis of each risk level in the plan. The Board chose to eliminate many of the unenforceable mitigation strategies and instead plan to focus its efforts on promoting and providing additional education on the everyday strategies people can adopt and follow that will help to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in our communities. Two mitigation measures that will remain in the plan are Health Orders requiring face coverings and limitations on social gatherings and events outside of the Minimal (green) Risk Level. This is because these are two proven public health strategies that can help slow the spread of the virus.

The BOH and EIPH also feel it is imperative for local elected officials and school and community leaders to expand their role in helping their cities and counties reduce the spread of COVID-19 to protect the limited healthcare resources in our communities and region. EIPH will continue to collaborate with leaders to assist them in these efforts.

The metrics (active cases/10,000 population) to elevate a county to the Moderate (yellow) Risk Level will remain the same and are based on the expected number of COVID-19 hospitalizations that result when cases reach that level. For an individual county to be elevated to the High (orange) Risk Level, the rate of active cases/10,000 population has been reduced from 50 to 30. For the region, we are currently at 27.3 active case/10,000 population which has resulted in increased hospitalizations and is placing an increasing burden on our hospitals and healthcare systems. When healthcare systems are stressed, it affects not only COVID-19

patients but all people seeking higher levels of medical care. Following the four key risk reduction strategies will reduce the impact on hospitals and help them continue to provide the medical care we have become accustomed to in our region.

Due to their dramatic increase in COVID-19 cases, Madison County has been elevated to the High (orange) Risk Level. Escalation to this level serves as a warning that the situation is becoming more serious and if a person hasn't adopted the four key risk reduction strategies, now would be a great time to start.

For a more detailed discussion on the thought process behind these decisions, please view the October 8, 2020 BOH meeting on EIPH's YouTube Channel. The revised EIPH COVID-19 Regional Response Plan will be available on our website by next week.

Stay Informed

Current COVID-19 active and total case counts, details on all cases, and much more, can be found on our website and dashboard at www.EIPH.Idaho.gov. EIPH also has a COVID-19 call center to answer questions. Call 208-522-0310 or toll free at 855-533-3160. The call center is open Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. In addition, questions can be submitted via email to COVIDQuestions@eiph.idaho.gov or asked through our Facebook page at [@EIPH.Idaho](https://www.facebook.com/EIPH.Idaho).

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