

**JOHNSON COUNTY HEALTH OFFICER  
PUBLIC HEALTH ORDER 2020-2**

**COUNTYWIDE VARIANCE ORDER TO THE RESTRICTIONS MANDATED IN  
STATEWIDE PUBLIC HEALTH ORDER #2 (THIRD CONTINUATION, AND  
MODIFICATION, OF STATEWIDE PUBLIC HEALTH ORDER #2:  
FORBIDDING GATHERINGS OF TEN (10) PEOPLE OR MORE)**

WHEREAS, Dr. Mark Schueler, MD, serves as the Johnson County Health Officer pursuant to Wyo. Stat. Ann. § 35-1-306(a); and

WHEREAS, Wyo. Stat. Ann. § 35-1-240(a)(i), (ii), and (iv) gives the power to the Wyoming Department of Health, through the State Health Officer, or under her direction and supervision, or through the other employees of the Wyoming Department of Health to control the causes of communicable disease; to close theaters, schools and other public places; and to forbid gatherings of people when necessary to protect the public health; and

WHEREAS, as evidenced by her signature below, Dr. Alexia Harrist, MD, PhD, the Wyoming State Health Officer, has reviewed and directed the issuance of this Variance Order by Dr. Mark Schueler, Johnson County Health Officer, and Dr. Alexia Harrist, the State Health Officer, also specifically makes the finding that this Variance Order is necessary for protection of the public health; and

WHEREAS, the State Health Officer has issued Statewide Order #2 dealing with gatherings; and

WHEREAS, Statewide Order #2 is specifically titled: *Third Continuation, and Modification, of Statewide Public Health Order #2: Forbidding Gatherings of Ten (10) People or More*. Statewide Order #2 originally was to expire on April 3, 2020, however, it was extended by the First Continuation Order to April 17, 2020. The Second Continuation Order extended Statewide Order #2 to April 30, 2020. The Third Continuation Order now extends the closures through May 15, 2020, and allows for a County Health Officer to request a less restrictive or more restrictive countywide variance to the order; and

WHEREAS, COVID-19 was first detected in Wuhan, China in 2019, and since then has spread throughout the world to include the United States, the State of Wyoming, and Johnson County; and

**WHEREAS, COVID-19 is a respiratory illness, transmitted through person-to-person contact or by contact with surfaces contaminated with the virus. Persons infected with COVID-19 may become symptomatic two to fourteen days after exposure. The symptoms of COVID-19 include fever, cough, and shortness of breath. In some cases, COVID-19 can result in severe disease including hospitalization, admission to an intensive care unit, and death, especially among older adults and persons with serious underlying health conditions; and**

**WHEREAS, the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a worldwide pandemic as of March 11, 2020; and**

**WHEREAS, on March 13, 2020, the President of the United States declared a national emergency concerning the coronavirus, specifically stating that, in “December 2019 a novel (new) coronavirus known as SARS-CoV-2 (“the virus”) was first detected in Wuhan, Hubei Province, People’s Republic of China, causing outbreaks of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) that has now spread globally [...] The spread of COVID-19 within our Nation’s communities threatens to strain our Nation’s healthcare systems. [...] Additional measures [...] are needed to successfully contain and combat the virus in the United States[;]” and**

**WHEREAS, on March 13, 2020, Wyoming Governor Mark Gordon declared a State of Emergency and Public Health Emergency in the State of Wyoming, and the State of Wyoming is experiencing a public health emergency in response to the evolving COVID-19 outbreak; and**

**WHEREAS, Governor Gordon’s Declaration of a State of Emergency and Public Health Emergency directs the Wyoming Department of Health to take all appropriate and necessary actions, and that in the judgment of the Director of the Wyoming Department of Health, any actions necessary should be taken to provide aid to those locations where there is a threat or danger to public health, safety, and welfare; and**

**WHEREAS, a significant number of Wyoming citizens are at risk of serious health complications, including death, from COVID-19. Although most individuals who contract COVID-19 do not become seriously ill, people with mild symptoms, and even asymptomatic persons with COVID-19, place other vulnerable members of the public at significant risk; and**

**WHEREAS, a large number of persons with serious infections can compromise the ability of the healthcare system to deliver the necessary healthcare to the public; and**

**WHEREAS, the Wyoming Department of Health has issued data-driven decision-making metrics to inform public health orders that include the following: number of positive cases, percent of cases attributed to community spread, percent of total tests that**

are positive, total reported COVID-19 hospitalizations, total reported hospital bed capacity, total ICU bed availability, daily COVID-19 testing volume, testing capacity, PPE supplies, and COVID-19 outbreaks in communal settings; and

WHEREAS, in addition to the above findings, stopping the spread of COVID-19 includes wearing a mask, washing hands often, practicing social distancing by avoiding close contact with others, staying at least six feet away from someone who is ill or showing signs of illness, avoiding touching your face, eyes, nose and mouth, and covering your cough or sneeze into your elbow or by using a tissue; and

WHEREAS, as of May 5, 2020, there have been eleven (11) laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 cases in Johnson County, and there are currently zero (0) laboratory-confirmed active cases; the last COVID-19 laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 case in Johnson County was on April 11, 2020; and

WHEREAS, testing supplies have increased in Johnson County; there is increased capacity to test symptomatic patients; and Johnson County is planning to increase testing starting the week that this Variance Order is issued.

NOW THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED THAT residents of Johnson County shall comply with Statewide Order #2 (*Third Continuation and Modification, of Statewide Public Health Order #2: Forbidding Gatherings of Ten (10) People or More*) with the following exceptions:

1. Religious organizations and funeral homes may allow gatherings subject to the following provisions, to be enforced by religious organization leaders or funeral home owners, as relevant:
  - a. A 6-foot distance must be maintained between individual household groups at all times;
  - b. The number of people in a confined area at any time must be limited to allow for adequate distancing between households;
  - c. Close contact between members of different households is prohibited before, during, and after the meeting or service;
  - d. Reading materials, collection plates, and communion trays must be passed out to individual attendees by staff rather than passed between attendees;
  - e. Religious organization leaders, funeral home owners, and staff must be screened for symptoms of COVID-19 or exposure to a person with confirmed COVID-19 during the previous 14 days; leaders, owners, or staff with symptoms of illness or known exposure to a person with COVID-19



infection within the previous 14 days shall not participate in the service or meeting;

f. Buildings must be cleaned thoroughly including all high touch areas before and after each service or meeting, done according to CDC guidelines for cleaning;

g. Communion must be served in individual containers; if containers are not available for the communion item, assigned individuals may place the item into an attendee's hands only after appropriate hand washing has been completed and while wearing gloves and a mask;

h. There may be no exchange of food or drink;

i. Religious organization leaders, funeral home owners, and staff who come within 6 feet of attendees shall wear a face covering; and

j. In addition to the provisions above, religious organizations and funeral homes are encouraged to implement the following measures to prevent COVID-19 transmission:

i. Religious organizations and funeral homes should offer the ability to watch or listen to the service or meeting from home, if the organization has that ability;

ii. Hand sanitizer should be provided at the door for people to use upon entrance and exit from the building;

iii. Individuals participating in the service or meeting should be informed on maintaining proper hand hygiene, avoiding touching their face, eyes, nose and mouth, and covering coughs and sneezes;

iv. Individuals participating in the service or meeting should be informed to stay home if they are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 or have had known close contact with an individual with COVID-19 within the last 14 days;

v. Individuals should be encouraged to wear a face covering throughout the service; religious organization leader(s), funeral home owner(s), and staff speaking to the group do not need to wear a face covering while addressing the individuals present but must maintain a 6 foot distance from others; and

vi. High risk individuals and those who live or work with high-risk individuals should be encouraged to stay home; high risk individuals are those aged 65 and older, are immunocompromised, or have other

health factors as identified by the CDC that increase risk of becoming seriously ill if exposed to COVID-19; religious organizations and funeral homes should designate areas inside the facility reserved for high-risk individuals or offer a service for high-risk individuals only.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Johnson County Health Officer may grant exceptions to this Countywide Variance to Statewide Order #2 on a case by case basis after evaluating the request and after obtaining written approval from the State Health Officer; and

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that this Countywide Variance to Statewide Order #2 shall remain in effect until such time as the Johnson County Health Officer enters a decision to revoke or modify this variance, under the direction and supervision of the State Health Officer; and

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED, that any person or legal entity that violates this Order shall be subject to criminal prosecution under Wyo. Stat. Ann. §§ 35-1-105 and 35-1-106.

DATED THIS \_\_\_\_ DAY OF \_\_\_\_\_, 2020.

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Dr. Mark Schueler  
Johnson County Health Officer

**Direction to Issue Order**

I, Dr. Alexia Harrist, the Wyoming State Health Officer, hereby state that I have reviewed the above variance and hereby direct, pursuant to Wyo. Stat. Ann. §§ 35-1-227 and -240(a)(i), (ii), and (iv), Dr. Mark Scheuler, the Johnson County Health Officer, to issue the above Countywide Variance in Johnson County, Wyoming. As the State Health Officer, I specifically deem that this Variance Order is appropriate for Johnson County. I will reassess the necessity of this variance as appropriate to do so and according to accepted epidemiological and medical standards.



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Dr. Alexia Harrist  
Wyoming State Health Officer