

# **LARAMIE COUNTY RECOVERY PLAN**

**Effective Date: July 17, 2020**

**This version supersedes all previous ones**

## **Planning Subcommittee**

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## **IMPORTANT NOTICE #1**

This version of the Recovery Plan is consistent with the Eighth Continuation of Statewide Orders that were released on June 29, 2020.

Events that fall outside current State orders also must be approved as “variances” by both the County and State Health Departments.

## **IMPORTANT NOTICE #2**

For the general public, wearing of a face covering or mask, in public near other people, protects other members of society from infection as well as indicating a commitment to the safety of others. Many businesses and organizations, however, require their employees to wear face coverings while on duty, consistent with public health requirements.

There is no requirement to wear a mask while outside during general open-air activity (walking, exercise, outdoor work) when not near other members of the general public, but it is strongly recommended that individuals wear masks inside any establishment or location where other members of the public are within 6 feet, including outdoors.

All organizations that offer public access (businesses, churches, museums, etc.) *retain the right to make the wearing of masks a requirement for entry* as they feel appropriate, in the same manner as they are allowed to set requirements for public attire and/or behavior in their establishments.

People with certain medical conditions or disabilities may be exempted from mask requirements, and other accommodations may be necessary, if possible.

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# Background

## **National and State Developments**

Laramie County, along with the rest of the country, is currently relaxing the severe curtailments on businesses and organizations imposed in late March, in an attempt to restart the local economy. Most states, however, are seeing significant spikes in new COVID-19 cases as they reopen. We are seeing significant increases in Wyoming also, but we want to avoid the dramatic increases in new cases (and hospitalizations) seen in some other states.

## **Laramie County**

The Cheyenne/Laramie County Health Department (C/LCHD), Cheyenne/Laramie County Emergency Management, and local Elected Officials are working to develop a Laramie County Recovery Plan based on current statewide orders. The initial plan will resemble the "Opening up America Again" guidelines, modified as appropriate for Wyoming, pending further guidance from Governor Gordon and the Wyoming Department of Health.

## **Current Statewide Orders**

Laramie County is following the lead of the Governor and the Wyoming Department of Health. Every two weeks, Statewide Orders are reissued and amended to reflect current COVID-19 activity in the state. The current orders are:

- Eighth Continuation and Modification of Statewide Public Health Order #1 Regarding Bars, Restaurants, Theaters, Gymnasiums, Childcare Facilities, K-12 Public Schools, Colleges, Universities and Trade Schools
- Eighth Continuation and Modification of Statewide Public Health Order #2 Regarding Gatherings of More Than Fifty People
- Eighth Continuation and Modification of Statewide Public Health Order #3 Regarding Nail Salons, Barber Shops, Massage Therapy Services, Tattoo, Body Art and Piercing Shops, and Cosmetology, Electrology and Esthetic Services

## **Recovery Strategy**

The strategy for economic recovery in Laramie County balances three concepts:

- The current economic restrictions due to the pandemic in Laramie County are causing unprecedented economic hardship
- Proceeding too quickly with loosening restrictions could result in a dramatic surge in COVID-19 cases, possibly overwhelming the healthcare system, resulting in unnecessary illness and mortality but proceeding too slowly extends the economic and social disruption unnecessarily
- We must strike the right balance between easing economic restrictions as quickly as possible while mitigating the risk of resurgent COVID-19 disease.

# Plan Overview

## Phases

The planned recovery in Laramie County initially envisions three phases of gradual easing of economic and social measures based on public health epidemiologic data. All phases of the plan require monitoring specific metrics (outcomes or milestones) in order to proceed to the next phase, with a 14-day pause to watch for worsening of disease in the community as a result of the easing. Figure 1 illustrates this process.



**Figure 1 – The initial phases of planned economic recovery. Moving into each phase requires community COVID-19 disease metrics to remain stable (or improve) for at least 14 days before proceeding to the next phase. At this time, we are in a maintenance phase characterized by easing of some restrictions where possible, but following statewide public health orders to avoid losing ground and re-imposing restrictions.**

Officially, the current state as of June 1, 2020 is “Phase 2”, the yellow box. In light of the sharp increase in lab-confirmed cases in Laramie County, Wyoming in general, and nationwide, further large scale easing of restrictions is not planned, and we may be entering a maintenance phase of pandemic management.

Metrics will be based on state-wide and local data provided by the Wyoming Department of Health (WDH) and the Cheyenne/Laramie County Health Department.

## State-Wide Metrics and the COVID-19 Dashboard.

The Wyoming Department of Health (WDH) will provide general state-wide metrics using the dashboard shown in Figure 2. It will provide the ongoing status of two broad areas:

- Overall disease and testing data
- Hospital capacity, including ICU capacity

WDH will also provide county-level data which will include:

- County level epidemiological curve (incidence of new cases)
- Percent of cases attributable to the risk factor referred to as “community spread”
- Daily lab testing volume
- Percent of positive test results
- Running two-week average of



**Figure 2 – Example of the state-wide COVID-19 Dashboard provided by WDH. This illustration shows the dashboard as of July 17, 2020, showing two areas of significant concern: new cases and rising hospital admissions.**

percentage of total tests that are positive

- Age group data (yet to be defined by WDH)
- Number of cases recovered

Information on individual patients and their contacts will be provided by C/LCHD. **Contact tracing by C/LCHD will be an integral part of disease control and prevention.**

**Laramie County Metrics**

C/LCHD will apply phase-specific county-level metrics (goals) to determine when it is appropriate to move to the next phase of recovery the local economy. The decision matrix appears in Figure 3 below. Each metric (or phase-specific goal) will be evaluated as either increasing, decreasing, or remaining level over the preceding 14-day period.

Phase Goals	Proceed with plan Clearly Decreasing Metric	Proceed with caution Generally Level Metric	Stop – Do not proceed Clearly Increasing Metric
County level epi curve			<b>X</b>
Percentage of cases due to community spread		<b>X</b>	
Total hospital admissions due to COVID-19	<b>X</b>		
Percentage of ICU beds occupied by COVID-19	<b>X</b>		
Percentage of COVID-19 tests that are positive			<b>X</b>

**Figure 3 – Evaluation Matrix for deciding whether to proceed to the next phase the plan. The X’s show the status of the metrics as of June 30. The percentage of cases due to community spread remains somewhat concerning at about 30 – 40%. Because of a large number of new cases that are now appearing, the Laramie County epidemiological curve is in the red column.**

The colors are patterned after traffic lights. All metrics must be either green or yellow for the plan to proceed to the next phase. Metrics in yellow suggest “proceed with caution” but do not prohibit moving forward.

If one metric appears in the red column, we would probably need to delay proceeding to the next phase. If two or more metrics are red, we would need to carefully analyze the reason for this. Depending on the reason, we might need to reestablish some types of restrictions, in addition to delaying the next phase. This would be a step backward and we would not do it lightly, but it could be necessary for public safety.

The evaluation grid for the five metrics is pictured in Figure 3 on page 3 above. The X’s show the status of the metrics.

**1. County-level epidemiological curve**

This is the daily graph of the new confirmed cases in the county. There is an example in Figure 4 below. C/LCHD has been tracking this since mid-March, and will consider this metric in deciding on the pace recovery. Currently, cases are rising markedly.

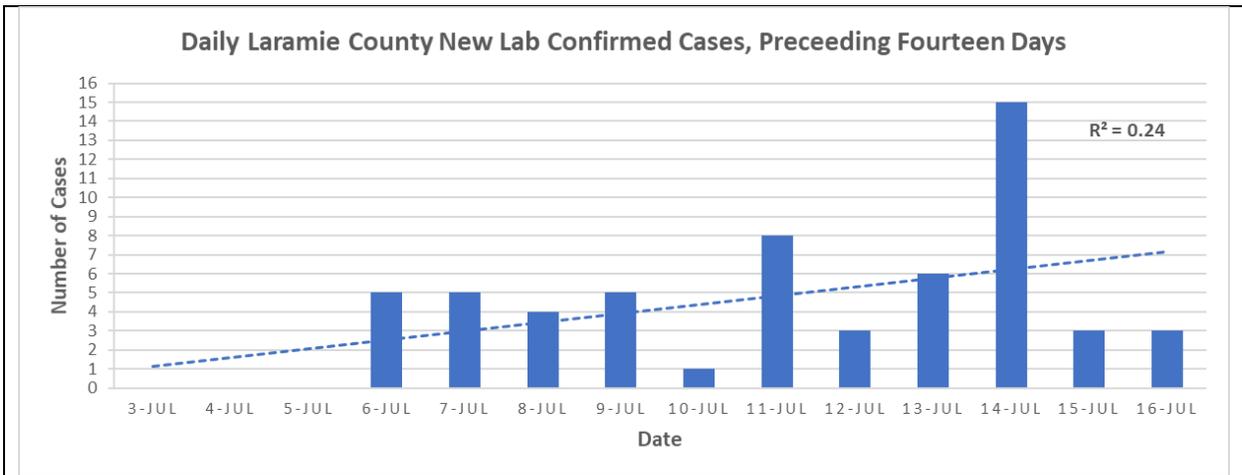


Figure 4 – The 14-day epidemiological curve (epi curve for short) as of July 16, 2020.

**2. Percentage of cases due to community spread**

This is the percentage of all confirmed COVID-19 cases that are due to “community spread”, defined as those cases who have no identified contact with another lab-confirmed case, and therefore are assumed to have contracted the disease due to a random contact. This has been hovering between 35% and 40% as shown in Figure 5.

**3. Total hospital admissions due to COVID-19**

Tracked thru CRMC. Currently favorable.

**4. Percentage of ICU beds occupied by COVID-19 patients**

Tracked thru CRMC. Currently favorable.

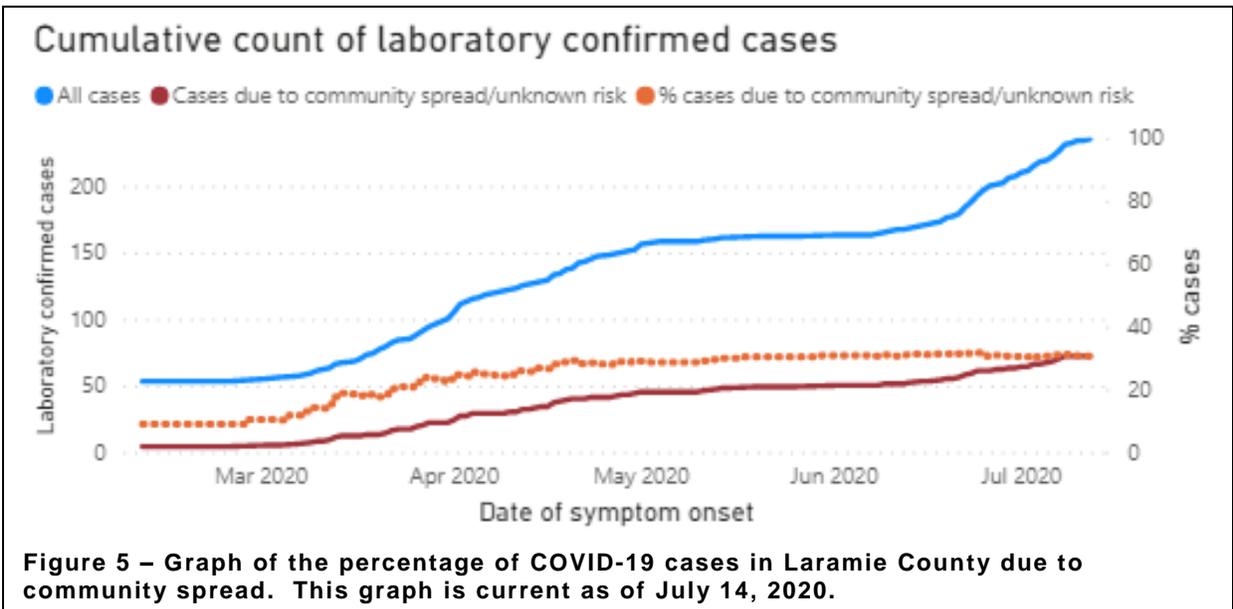


Figure 5 – Graph of the percentage of COVID-19 cases in Laramie County due to community spread. This graph is current as of July 14, 2020.

**5. Percentage of COVID-19 tests that are positive**

As we increase testing, we expect to find more positives. Therefore, tracking the percentage of tests that are positive is a better indicator of overall disease activity.

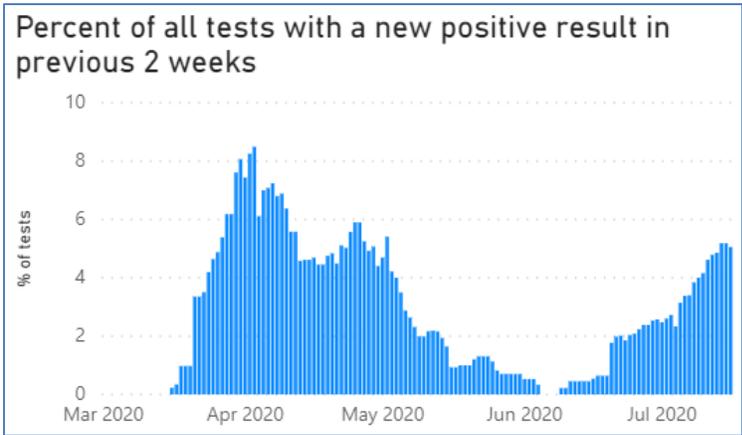


Figure 6 – Graph of the percentage of all COVID-19 tests that are positive. This graph is current as of July 17, 2020.

**6. Laboratory-confirmed cases by age group**

This is not a specific metric that will determine whether we can relax any restrictions in Laramie County, but it is interesting and therefore I will start including it in future versions of this document.

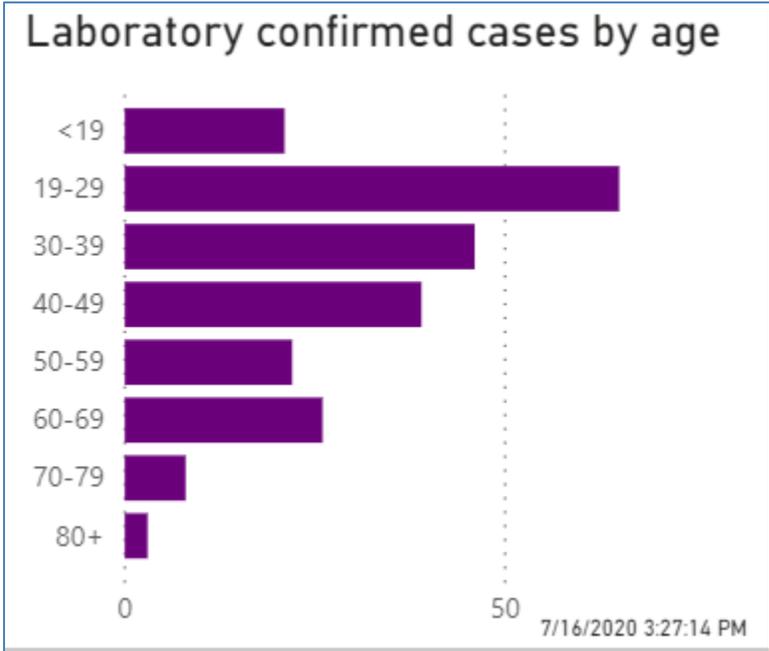


Figure 7 – This graphic demonstrates that the highest number of laboratory-confirmed cases in Laramie County as of July 16, 2020 is the 19 – 29-year age group, followed by the 30 – 39-year group and the 40 – 49-year age group. Although these age groups are relatively likely to avoid severe complications of COVID-19 infection, they are also highly likely to become asymptomatic spreaders of the virus in the community.

## General Guidelines

Please refer to the Statewide Orders posted on the web sites of the Cheyenne/Laramie County Health Department (C/LCHD) and Wyoming Department of Health web sites for details. Questions may be directed to

### **General Public and Employers**

For the general public, masks or face coverings are generally not required while outside in the open air (walking down the street, exercising, biking, working outside) but are strongly encouraged when around others not in the same household. In particular, the general public is encouraged to wear face coverings while in any organization that is open to the public (stores, museums, churches, etc.).

Organizations that serve the public must require their staff to wear face coverings when interacting with the public.

**Any establishment may, at its discretion, require the public to wear a face covering while inside the establishment, and may refuse service to anyone who does not comply. Persons with certain medical conditions or disabilities may require an exemption, and reasonable accommodations should then be available, if possible.**

### **Statewide Public Health Order #1 (Eighth Continuation)**

#### ***Restaurants and Bars***

**It is the intent of this order to say that six feet of distance between separate groups of patrons must be maintained at all times, regardless of the type of seating.**

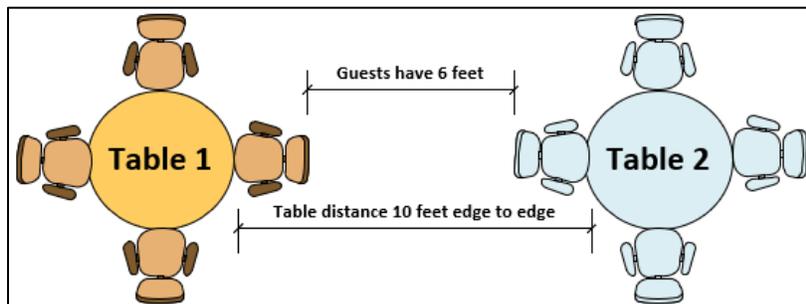


Figure 8 – illustration of the need for appropriate seating spacing to allow guests to have adequate social distancing. This example uses tables but the same principle applies to all types of seating. When seating cannot be moved (booths for example), some seating units will need to be blocked off to allow social distancing.

#### ***Gymnasiums***

Operating in a limited capacity, as outlined in Statewide Order #1 (Eighth Continuation).

#### ***Performance Venues***

Accommodations for physical distancing required, as outlined in Statewide Order #1 (Eighth Continuation).

#### ***Childcare and Schools***

Specific guidance for childcare and daycare is outlined in Statewide Order #1 (Eighth Continuation). A specific plan for opening K-12 schools is currently under development.

#### ***Exemptions from Order #1***

See Statewide Order #1 (Eighth Continuation) for the types of establishments that are exempted from certain requirements.

## **Statewide Public Health Order #2 (Eighth Continuation)**

### ***Exemptions from Order #2***

Religious organizations and funeral homes are now specifically exempted from Statewide Order #2 (Eighth Continuation), effective July 1, 2020, and may now operate without restrictions. Appropriate precautions are still recommended however.

Other exempted establishments are listed in the order.

### ***Size of Gatherings***

Indoor and outdoor gatherings may now include up to 250 people, subject to conditions outlined in Statewide Order #2 (Eighth Continuation).

## **Statewide Public Health Order #3 (Eighth Continuation)**

Establishments offering personal services such as nail salons, massage, body art, etc. must require staff to wear face coverings when within six feet of patrons and other staff.

Patrons must wear face coverings as much as possible while receiving service.

Details are outlined in Statewide Order #3 (Eighth Continuation).

## Variations

Exemptions and variations from current statewide orders must be approved by the Cheyenne/Laramie County Health Department (C/LCHD) and by the Wyoming Department of Health. Organizations or events that wish to have a variance or to be exempted from any provision of the statewide orders must submit a formal request to C/LCHD with a reason why the exemption or variance is justified.

C/LCHD can review plans for events and assist the event planner to come up with a plan that is in compliance, and possibly avoid the need for a variance.

## Definitions

- Community spread – cases are appearing in patients who, after contact tracing, have no identifiable contact with someone with COVID-19.
- Contact tracing – a primary intervention by public health to mitigate the spread of disease. It consists of interviewing individuals with a contagious disease, eliciting that person’s social contacts, and following up with those individuals for symptom monitoring, counseling, and referral for appropriate treatments and services. This activity is a cornerstone of public health practice.
- Masks and face coverings – in a non-medical setting this document uses “masks” and “face coverings” interchangeably. These refer to any fabric covering of the lower face including the mouth and nose. Based on current disease understanding, these do little to prevent the wearer from becoming infected, but current evidence indicates effectiveness in reducing the spread of virus if the wearer is infected but has no symptoms. They also have benefit in reminding the wearer to avoid touching his or her face while in public, which can also slow the spread of infection.
- Social distancing – the practice of staying at least six feet away from other people while in public, except for others who share the same household. Because the virus that causes COVID-19 is transmitted through the air and on contaminated surfaces, social distancing (along with frequent cleaning and hand hygiene) is a primary method for preventing spread of the disease.
- Vulnerable Individuals
  - Persons 65 years or older, regardless of baseline state of health.
  - Individuals with underlying health conditions, including high blood pressure, chronic lung disease, diabetes, obesity, asthma, and those whose immune system is compromised (such as by cancer therapy, or certain medical conditions).