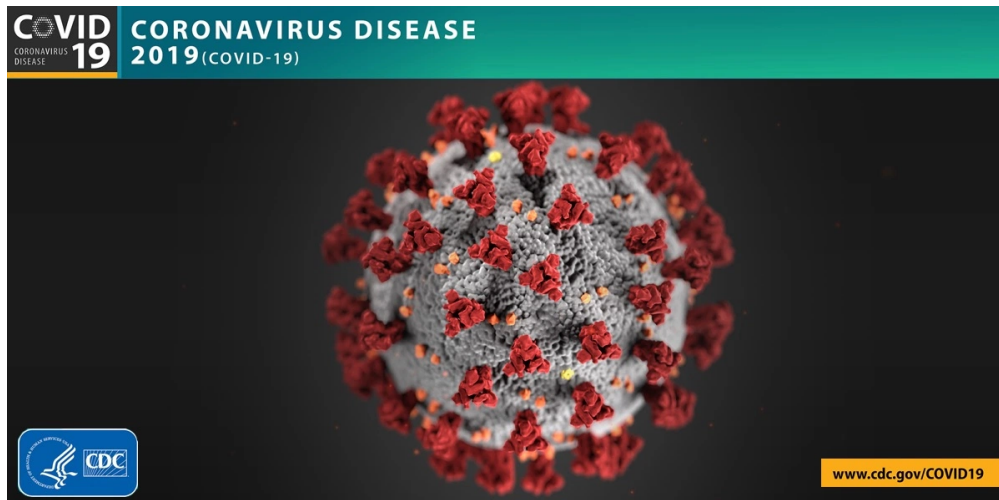


## LATEST HEADLINES

# State raises Logan County to 'High Risk' on COVID-19 dial, slaps on new restrictions

Active cases continue to climb toward 200



State raises Logan County to 'High Risk' on COVID-19 dial, slaps on new restrictions

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***UPDATED to include new information and responses from Logan County Commissioners.***

New restrictions are in place in Logan County after the Colorado Department of Public health and Environment moved the county back one level on the COVID-19 Safer-at-Home Dial.

Logan County had been situated at Level 2 since the dial was introduced. Because of the significant increase in case numbers over the past month, the county has been moved to Level 3: High Risk. This means a greater level of restrictions and requirements are in place effective immediately.

According to a statement by Trish McClain, Northeast Colorado Health Director, this is not news for the county.

“Conversations began between CDPHE, the Northeast Colorado Health Department and the commissioners on September 16th, where a number of plans were initiated in the hopes of bringing the case increases under better control,” McClain said.

At the time the county was notified in September, Logan County had a two-week cumulative incidence rate of 6.343 cases per 1,000 people, a testing positivity rate of 5.22 percent and a two-week new-case count of 139. As of Sunday, Oct. 18, Logan County had 188 active cases, or slightly more than eight cases per 1,000 population.

CDPHE immediately instituted new restrictions on meetings and venues in Logan County. Churches, restaurants and offices immediately are restricted to 25 percent of capacity. Other services and events have a 25-person cap or could have a lower cap depending on the events. Long-term care facilities are now closed except for compassionate visitation. The process will require the county to implement restrictions across all sectors as described in Section II C of Public Health Order 20-35, as amended.

As a result of the move to Level 3 status, Northeastern Junior College has announced that [remote learning for all lecture courses](#) and restricted campus activity will be put into place starting at 5 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 21 and continue until Logan County, including Northeastern, demonstrates two consecutive weeks of the guidelines set by CDPHE.

Classes in career and technical education, that have labs (biology, chemistry, etc.) and other classes with a hands on component (stained glass, ceramics, etc.) will continue to run in a face-to-face format. There will be strict enforcement on social distancing, masks, sanitation, etc.

Residents halls will remain open and quarantine and isolation will be implemented as needed. Students are encouraged to stay on campus. Students who are not quarantined, may move about the campus and Sterling as needed in groups of 10 or less.

COVID testing at the college scheduled for Wednesday and Thursday has been cancelled by direction of the Logan County Commissioners Office. The commissioners also cancelled a mobile testing day that had been scheduled at Logan County Fairgrounds this week. In an email to the Journal-Advocate, Board of Commissioners Chairman Joe McBride said there didn't seem to be a need for more testing.

"It did not appear that mass testing was an effective mitigation tool," McBride said. "We continually work with the Office of Emergency Management on the continual changes offered by state guidance."

McClain said she thought the commissioners were disappointed at the results of the previous testing.

"I think the commissioners are pretty disappointed that we were encouraged to do additional testing," she said. "I think they feel like the additional testing is a double-edged sword in that it increased the number of positive cases."

According to NCHD's statement, Logan County residents will have to work hard to get back to Level 2. Easing the restrictions would require a 10 percent positivity rate or less – that's one criterion that's never been a problem for the county – no more than 1.75 cases per thousand population and no more than two new COVID-19 hospital admissions per day

"These numbers are not impossible," McClain said. "The county has shown and maintained them for many weeks prior to the recent increase. We believe everyone needs to work together and get the numbers down."

Failure to get a handle on the numbers would mean going back to an almost complete shutdown of schools and businesses.

"If the numbers continue to increase at the rate they have, it is possible that CDPHE may shift the county back into a Stay At Home phase, which is what we began back in March," McClain said. "This can mean closures for schools and our businesses, and many people are expected to stay home; obviously no one wants this."

The release urged residents wear masks around other people, practice social distancing, and wash hands frequently

"We have the power, and it is time we use that power and lead by example and get this trend reversed," McClain said. "We have until Oct. 29 to get our numbers down. It is then that the county commissioners and CDPHE will have a meeting to see if we can move up on the dial. We need to stop the numbers from continuing to go up, and we need to stop it now."

The Journal-Advocate reached out to Logan County Board of Commissioners Chairman Joe McBride for with questions Tuesday afternoon, but did not receive a response.



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