

SAN JUAN BASIN PUBLIC HEALTH

HEALTH DISTRICT FOR ARCHULETA AND LA PLATA COUNTIES

FOURTH AMENDED PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY: COVID-19 TRANSMISSION CONTROL

November 12, 2021

Severe and highly transmissible variants of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) remain prevalent in Archuleta and La Plata Counties, Colorado. San Juan Basin Public Health (SJBPH) continues to urge all residents to take measures to protect themselves from this novel virus. **SJBPH advises all residents and visitors that the risk of contracting COVID-19 when participating in indoor activities with mixed households who are unvaccinated or have mixed or unknown vaccination status against COVID-19 remains high.**

I. INTRODUCTION

As of November 10, 2021, the seven-day case incidence rate of COVID-19 in La Plata County was 416.9 cases per 100,000 residents, which is identified as “High” by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the seven-day case incidence rate of COVID-19 in Archuleta County was 658.3 cases per 100,000 residents, which is identified as “High” by the CDC. These figures are the highest incidence rates observed in both counties in calendar year 2021. Not enough people are fully vaccinated to control the pandemic through vaccination alone. In addition, evidence suggests that fully vaccinated individuals may transmit the Delta variant of the virus, which is dominant in Colorado, to others even if they do not develop severe symptoms themselves. Therefore, additional measures are needed to keep our communities safe.

The best protection against COVID-19 is to overlap multiple strategies to reduce exposure. These strategies include vaccination, wearing a face covering, physical distancing, holding social gatherings and conducting business outdoors instead of indoors, maximizing indoor ventilation, symptom screening, and hand hygiene.

For the purposes of this Advisory, “Public Indoor Space” means any enclosed indoor area that is publicly or privately owned, managed, or operated to which individuals have access by right or by invitation, expressed or implied, and that is accessible to the public, serves as a place of employment, or is an entity providing services. Public Indoor Space does not mean a person’s residence, including a room in a motel or hotel or a residential room for students at an educational facility.

II. VACCINATION AND THERAPEUTICS

SJBPH advises that safe and highly effective vaccines against COVID-19 are now widely available in Archuleta and La Plata Counties for those 5 years of age and older. Booster vaccines are authorized and recommended for those who originally received the single-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine and are over the age of 18, as well as those who received a Pfizer or Moderna vaccine and are either 65 years of age and older, an adult with high-risk medical conditions, or an adult who is high risk of exposure. On November 10, 2021, Jared Polis, Governor of Colorado, declared the entire state of Colorado high risk for exposure for the purpose of booster shot eligibility.

SJBPH urges eligible unvaccinated individuals to get vaccinated as soon as possible, urges partially vaccinated people to complete their vaccination series to maximize their level of protection, and urges eligible patients to receive a booster shot. SJBPH strongly urges parents of an eligible child to vaccinate their child as soon as possible.

SJBPH further advises that, as of January 4, 2022, federal regulations will require private employers who have more than 100 employees to require that all of their employees are fully vaccinated or get tested for COVID-19 on a weekly basis and wear a mask in the workplace, subject to certain exemptions. In addition, on the same date, federal regulations will require healthcare workers at a facility that receives Medicare or Medicaid to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19, and federal contractors and employees thereof will be required to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19, subject to certain exemptions. SJBPH urges affected employers to comply with this requirement as soon as possible. More information is available at [this link](#).

Monoclonal antibody treatments are now available in southwest Colorado. These treatments can help prevent severe illness for some people aged 12 years and older who get infected with COVID-19, have mild or moderate symptoms, and are at high risk of developing severe COVID-19 due to age or medical condition. People who meet these criteria should consult their physician for a possible referral for monoclonal antibody therapy.

III. ESTABLISHMENTS AND SPECIAL EVENTS

SJBPH advises residents and visitors to only patronize indoor establishments and special events that adhere to the face covering and physical distancing recommendations in this Public Health Advisory; these places pose less of a risk to your health than places that do not require face coverings and limit capacity as advised in sections IV and V below.

To promote compliance with this Public Health Advisory, SJBPH has made signage available at [this link](#) that can be displayed at establishments and events that comply with face covering, physical distancing and ventilation recommendations. SJBPH advises owners, operators and managers of public indoor spaces and events to demonstrate their commitment to community safety by complying with this advisory and publicly displaying this signage.

SJBPH further advises that establishments and special events should consider requiring employees, customers and/or guests to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19, or to require a recent (less than 48 hours) negative test to be presented on entry by unvaccinated employees, customers, and/or guests. Widespread vaccination, combined with other mitigation strategies listed in sections III and IV below, continues to be the best approach to reduce the burden of disease in our community.

Establishments and special events can demonstrate their commitment to protecting their employees, customers, and attendees by taking the statewide “Power the Comeback” pledge at [this link](#), providing vaccination opportunities and incentives, and displaying signage on masking and vaccination.

Employers are reminded that all employers in the state, regardless of size, are **required** to provide a supplement of up to 80 hours of COVID-related leave in 2021, including paid sick leave for getting the COVID-19 vaccine and recovering from side effects that prevent an employee from working. More information on this requirement is available at [this link](#).

IV. FACE COVERING

SJBPH urges all individuals in Archuleta and La Plata Counties to wear a face covering while in a Public Indoor Space, unless the individual is two years of age or younger, or cannot medically tolerate a face covering, except in the situations below:

- Individuals who are hearing impaired or otherwise disabled or who are communicating with someone who is hearing impaired or otherwise disabled and where the ability to see the mouth is essential to communication;
- Individuals who are seated at a food service establishment;

- Individuals who are exercising alone or with others from the individual’s household and a face covering would interfere with the activity;
- Individuals who are receiving a personal service where the temporary removal of the face covering is necessary to perform the service;
- Individuals who enter a business or receive services and are asked to temporarily remove a face covering for identification purposes;
- Individuals who are actively engaged in a public safety role such as law enforcement, firefighters, or emergency medical personnel;
- Individuals who are officiating at a religious service; or
- Individuals who are giving a speech for broadcast or an audience.

SJBPH advises that owners, operators, or managers of a public indoor space should deny service or entry to individuals unless the individual is wearing a face covering as recommended above, in order to protect workers, customers, and the community.

V. PHYSICAL DISTANCING AND MITIGATION MEASURES

SJBPH further advises that all owners, operators or managers of public indoor spaces maintain physical distancing requirements (where all persons can maintain at least a six-foot distance from other individuals who are not a member of their household or party) within their Public Indoor Space to the extent possible. Owners, operators and managers of Public Indoor Spaces should limit capacity such that six feet of distance is maintained between households or parties, excluding staff.

In addition, SJBPH recommends that employers and business and event operators implement the following transmission control measures in Public Indoor Spaces:

- Monitoring symptoms in employees at the worksite or through employee self-assessment at home prior to coming to the worksite. If an employee reports any symptoms of COVID-19 or tests positive for COVID-19, take all of the following steps:
 - Send employee home immediately,
 - Exclude employee until they are no longer contagious per public health guidance.
 - If five or more employees have symptoms of COVID-19, consult outbreak guidance from CDPHE available at [this link](#), contact SJBPH, and cooperate with outbreak investigators.
- Provide work accommodations for individuals at risk of severe illness from COVID-19, such as telecommuting, until such individuals are fully vaccinated against COVID-19.
- Encourage and enable remote work whenever possible.
- Schedule and stagger shifts and breaks, whenever possible, to reduce employee density at the worksite and in common areas.
- Improve ventilation of indoor spaces to the extent possible, according to CDC guidance available at [this link](#).
- Provide hand sanitizer and/or sinks with soap and hot water for customers and employees.
- Post signage for employees and customers on good hand hygiene and the requirement to wear Face Coverings. Example signage is available at [this link](#).

VI. SCHOOLS, CHILDCARE, AND HIGHER EDUCATION

SJBPH further advises P-12 schools, childcare facilities (regardless of licensure status), extracurricular activities, and higher education institutions to require face coverings for all persons in indoor school, childcare, and activity settings, in alignment with CDC guidance found at [this link](#) and [this link](#) except given the exceptions in section IV above. Schools, childcare facilities, extracurricular activities and higher education institutions should adopt serial testing strategies, improve ventilation of indoor spaces, conduct

operations outdoors, emphasize hand hygiene, and physically space and cohort students and participants to the extent possible.

SJBPH advises the public that unvaccinated or partially vaccinated individuals meeting the CDC's definition of a close contact with a confirmed COVID-19 case are still subject to quarantine requirements, regardless of whether that contact takes place inside or outside of a school setting, in accordance with CDC exposure definitions and quarantine recommendations found at [this link](#).

VII. PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Individuals utilizing enclosed public transportation vehicles should maintain six-foot physical distancing to the extent possible. Public transportation providers should maximize ventilation on enclosed vehicles to reduce accumulation of the virus.

SJBPH reminds all transportation providers, including schools and extracurricular activities, that the CDC has issued an Order requiring individuals over the age of 2 to wear a face covering while riding in any public transportation conveyance. More information on this order can be found at [this link](#).

SJBPH will continue to evaluate the prevalence and risks of COVID-19 in Archuleta and La Plata Counties and adjust this Advisory and, if necessary, issue Public Health Orders accordingly.

Issued at 1:00 P.M. on November 12, 2021

By:  _____

Liane Jollon, Executive Director, SJBPH