



Press Release - For Immediate Release

September 15, 2021 12:00 PM

- Board of County Commissioners pass ordinance requiring masks
- North Idaho activates Crisis Standard of Care
- Hospitals send joint statement asking for community support
- Teton School District 401 update

Board of County Commissioners pass Ordinance 2021-0193 and North Idaho Activates Crisis Standard of Care

After modifying the Teton County Facilities Plan on August 23, 2021 requiring masks in all County facilities, the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) took further action by passing Ordinance 2021-0193, requiring masks to be worn in all unincorporated areas of the County while indoors in public places and when social distancing cannot be maintained. The BOCC first discussed the ordinance at a Special Meeting on Thursday September 8, 2021, but tabled the issue until their regular meeting on Monday September 13, 2021 so they could gather more information.

Teton Valley Health CEO, Keith Gnagey attended the BOCC's regular meeting on September 13, 2021 and reported on the current situation. He explained that for the first time in Idaho's history, a Crisis Standard of Care (CSC) was activated for 10 North Idaho hospitals. This means that due to space limitations, limited staff, and high numbers of covid patients, those seeking treatment for all types of health issues may not receive the care they need.

According to a statement from the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare (IDHW), "With the activation of Crisis Standards of Care for the ten hospitals in North Idaho, the situation has moved from extreme to dire. Operations will now move from treating all patients to treating "as many patients as possible." Mr. Gnagey noted that regional hospitals could see the same activation if numbers continue to climb. He explained that Teton Valley Health (TVH) has been seeing effects of overwhelmed regional hospitals as they have experienced delays in being able to transfer patients needing higher levels of care because there were no hospitals that had space to accept them. At an IDHW meeting today, September 15, 2021, Director Dave Jeppesen reported that the decision to move Public Health Regions 3,4, and 5 to Crisis Standards of Care was "imminent".

Once Ordinance 2021-0193 is published in the Teton Valley News today, September 15, 2021, it will go into full effect. To view the full ordinance [click here](#).

Regional Hospitals send joint statement asking for community support

In a joint statement all hospitals in the East Idaho region asked for community support to reduce COVID-19 numbers and to reduce hospitalizations so that they can maintain their normal quality of care, "Four of the largest hospitals in the region (EIRMC, Portneuf Medical Center, Idaho Falls Community Hospital, and Madison Memorial Hospital) collectively admitted a total of 74 inpatients with COVID illness in the month of July. That number soared to 157 in the month of August, representing a 112% increase.



Patients hospitalized with COVID-19 illness are *overwhelmingly* unvaccinated. Hospitals in our region are experiencing similar COVID-19 trends to those reported in other states and around the nation. We are also seeing younger and generally healthier people needing hospital care after contracting the virus. We strongly encourage people in our area to get the vaccine and follow the CDC’s recommendations for preventing the spread of the virus, including guidance around mask usage, social distancing and frequent hand washing.” To view the full joint statement [click here](#).

Teton School District 401 Update

Victor Elementary School, grades K-3 is closed Sept. 15-17, due to staff and student illness and absences, and related quarantine protocols. Some of that is due to COVID, some are for other illness-related leave. The school will open again Monday, Sept. 20. There are students and staff in quarantine at other schools and the District is working to follow established protocols in all cases. Parents, students, and staff are notified from the schools when that information is made available. The District continues to work closely with Eastern Idaho Public Health on quarantine protocols. A vaccination clinic is being provided by Teton Valley Health, for students and staff, at Teton Middle School and Teton High School today, September 15, 2021, for those that have not yet been vaccinated. Teton School District 401 is grateful for their support.

All agencies appreciate everyone’s cooperation as we work together to get through the current surge in cases. New information will be published as soon as it is available. For all COVID-19 information, please visit: <https://coronavirus-response-tetonidaho.hub.arcgis.com/>

Thank you for doing your part to protect our community.

Teton Valley Strong!