



A RESOURCE FOR HEALTHY LIVING FROM THE
GALLATIN CITY-COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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Press Release Gallatin County COVID-19 Update

The Gallatin City-County Health Department on Friday announced six additional COVID-19 cases in individuals from many areas of Gallatin County and urged residents and visitors to avoid settings such as parties, large gatherings, or crowded bars and restaurants where social distancing may be difficult.

As of 5 pm on June 25, 38 individuals in Gallatin County had tested positive for the virus that causes COVID-19 over the past seven days, for a cumulative total of 236 cases in Gallatin County during 2020. There were 32 confirmed active cases as of 5 pm on Thursday. Of those cases, none are hospitalized. (One person hospitalized earlier this week was discharged from the hospital.)

The cases reported this week live and work in many areas of Gallatin County. The Health Department this week has identified 10 cases in Big Sky, two cases in West Yellowstone, and several cases in the Gallatin Valley. (The West Yellowstone cases were reported after 5 pm on Thursday and will be reflected in the daily report total on Saturday.) The Health Department is also working with Montana State University to respond to five COVID-19 cases affiliated with the university. In all cases the Health Department is working with those who have been diagnosed, relevant local authorities and doing extensive contact tracing and testing to identify others who may have the disease.

“We are now seeing widespread community transmission similar to what we saw in late March and early April,” said Matt Kelley, Health Officer with Gallatin City-County Health Department. “And we are seeing significant numbers of cases in people who have been in crowded bars, parties, and other events.”

One way to measure cases in a community is through a rolling 7-day average of new cases. In Gallatin County the rolling seven-day average has increased by 50% over the past 14 days, from



3.6 cases per day two weeks ago to 5.4 cases on Friday. (A graphic showing the rolling seven day average is included in Figure A below.)

Kelley said the steadily increasing case numbers is concerning in light of rapid and expansive growth of outbreaks in other parts of the nation, including Texas, California, Florida, Arizona, and Oklahoma. Other states experiencing rising numbers of cases include Montana, Utah, Idaho, and Washington.

“This is serious and we need people to take it seriously,” said Kelley. “That means people should avoid crowded settings, wear face coverings where social distancing is difficult, and stay home when they are sick, even with mild symptoms.”

Especially concerning, Kelley said, is that a significant number of cases in Gallatin County are experiencing mild symptoms or no symptoms at all. That increases the possibility that the disease may be spreading among people who do not know or believe they are sick. This sort of disease spread can be more extensive and can lead to more serious illness in others, Kelley said.

Kelley reinforced the importance for all Montanans to take precautions and limit contact with others in order to protect themselves and to protect people with health conditions that make them especially vulnerable to the disease. He urged young people to be aware that their presence in crowded parties, bars and other settings can accelerate disease spread and could cause them to carry the virus to those who are most vulnerable. Kelley said being within six feet of others for 15 minutes or more increases the risk to spread and contract the disease.

“This is not just about you,” Kelley said. “This is about protecting your loved ones and your community.”

In light of the rise in cases, Kelley said Gallatin City-County Health Department will be taking a cautious and measured approach to efforts to allow visitors in nursing homes and other long-term care facilities that serve seniors. Gov. Steve Bullock announced this week that the state would move to allow more visitation of people in long-term care settings. Kelley urged families and care centers to take a cautious and patient approach, and reminded all that the Gallatin City-County Board of Health local emergency health rule continues to restrict visitation in order to protect seniors.

“We agree on the need to find ways to allow seniors to see their loved ones, and we are determined to make that happen in the safest possible way,” Kelley said. “Over the next 10 to 14 days, we will be working with facility managers, families, and the Board of Health to develop new guidelines that allow visitation in a way that protects seniors.”

Kelley noted that a high percentage of deaths from COVID-19 in the U.S. have happened in long-term care settings, where the disease can spread rapidly and where residents are especially vulnerable.

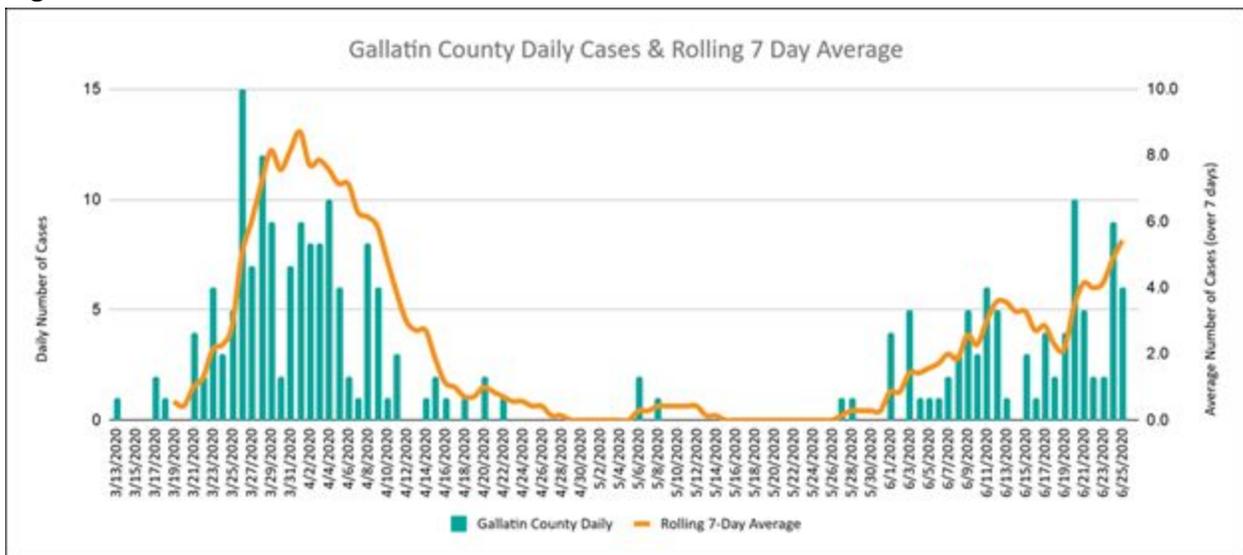


Kelley noted that the rise in cases has been accompanied by a detected presence of the virus in wastewater samples gathering in Big Sky and Bozeman. Sewage samples gathered in Three Forks have not detected the virus to date, and samples gathered in West Yellowstone were still pending Friday afternoon. Click here to learn more about how it works and access data: <https://www.healthygallatin.org/coronavirus-covid-19/wastewater-data/>

The Gallatin City-County Health Department Call Center is open seven days a week from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. to answer questions about COVID-19. Reach the Call Center by phone at 406-548-0123 or email at callcenter@readygallatin.com.

The most accurate local source of information remains the GCCHD [website](#) .

Figure A.



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