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Press Release

Special Board of Health Meeting on July 14

The Gallatin City-County Board of Health will hold a special meeting on Tuesday, July 14 to consider two measures designed to help slow the spread of COVID-19 and keep businesses operating during the ongoing pandemic.

The Board of Health plans to consider two emergency health rules at a meeting at 7 AM on Tuesday that will take place at The Commons at Baxter and Love, located at 1794 Baxter Ln. East.

The rules that the Board will consider on Tuesday can be found at [this link](#) under the “Related Docs” tab.

The first measure is a new emergency health rule that would require use of face coverings by most people within most indoor public settings, including retail businesses, bars and restaurants, government buildings and schools, and most other public indoor settings. The measure includes exceptions for certain people, including children under the age of 12 and people with medical conditions that would be exacerbated by face coverings.

“The intention of the face coverings rule is to allow the Board to consider all options to slow the spread of the disease and to keep businesses open and the economy moving,” said Matt Kelley, MPH, Health Officer for Gallatin County. “We are seeing rising case numbers every day and these measures are our best options to slow spread without closing businesses or issuing stay-at-home orders.”

Kelley noted that public health experts and epidemiologists recommend use of face coverings as one part of an effort to slow down the pandemic. Even with the use of face coverings, Kelley stressed the importance of other control efforts, including avoiding crowds, keeping six feet of space between you and others whenever possible, regular and thorough hand washing, and staying home when you are sick.

“Face masks are part of a larger effort,” Kelley said, “and we intend to try everything we can to slow down the virus and keep our businesses and economy running.”

The second measure on the Board’s agenda is an extension of the Board’s emergency rule requiring people who have tested positive for COVID-19 to remain in isolation until they are no longer contagious. The rule also requires quarantine of close contacts of known cases and those who are symptomatic and



awaiting test results. Isolation and quarantine requirements are a fundamental tool used for decades by public health officials to limit spread of disease and save lives.

Under Montana law (MCA 50-2-116) local boards of health are required to protect the public from the introduction and spread of communicable disease, including through use of isolation and quarantine measures. In April, the Gallatin City-County Board of Health adopted its emergency rule requiring isolation and quarantine of individuals diagnosed with COVID-19 or close contacts of known cases while they are potentially contagious. On Tuesday, the Board will consider extending that rule for 90 days.

“Isolation and quarantine are fundamental public health tools to slow the spread of disease,” Kelley said. “Without that tool, we stand little or no chance of slowing down the virus.”

Kelley stressed that those who are subject to the isolation or quarantine requirements would be contacted by staff of Gallatin City-County Health Department and informed that they are a case or a close contact of a known case. In addition, those who are symptomatic and awaiting test results orders by the Health Department or a health care provider. Kelley said people who do not have symptoms and are not a close contact of a known case are not required to quarantine.

While Tuesday’s meeting will be open to the public with social distancing protocols in place, we urge people to send public comments via email to help keep folks safe and social distanced.

Public comments can be sent via email to BOHPublicComment@gallatin.mt.gov. The Board will accept written comments until 4 PM on Monday, July 13.

To participate virtually in Tuesday’s meeting, please register in advance at [this link](#). After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

The meeting will also be audio live streamed [here](#).

The Gallatin City-County Health Department Call Center is open seven days a week from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. for 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](#).



