

Supplementary K-12 School Information – December 11, 2020

In addition to the data provided in the Weekly Surveillance Report, Gallatin City-County Health Department (GCCHD) will provide schools with the data necessary to measure where our community stands in regard to the CDC's ["Indicators for Dynamic School Decision Making."](#)

CDC Guidance for School Operations

The document recommends three "core" indicators to help school officials decide whether to open, close, or re-open schools. These core indicators include two measures of community disease burden (number of new cases per 100,000 persons in the past 14 days; and percentage of RT-PCR tests that are positive during the last 14 days) and one self-assessed measure of school implementation of key mitigation strategies.

New cases per 100,000 persons in the past 14 days: In Gallatin County, our best local data shows that we have 1011 new cases per 100,000 persons during the 14 days that ended on 12/10/2020.

Percentage of RT-PCR tests that are positive during the last 14 days: In Gallatin County, our test positivity rate for two week period that ended 12/1/2020 was 14%. Public health experts suggest a positivity rate above 10% may indicate a significant number of cases in the community are not being detected.

| Indicators | Lowest risk of transmission in schools | Lower risk of transmission in schools | Moderate risk of transmission in schools | Higher risk of transmission in schools | Highest risk of transmission in schools |
|--|--|---------------------------------------|--|--|---|
| Core Indicators | | | | | |
| Number of new cases per 100,000 persons within the last 14 days* | <5 | 5 to <20 | 20 to <50 | 50 to ≤ 200 | >200 |
| Percentage of RT-PCR tests that are positive during the last 14 days** | <3% | 3% to <5% | 5% to <8% | 8% to ≤ 10% | >10% |

It should also be noted that the 7-day rolling average for test positivity was 15.5% during the period that ended 12/8/2020, an increase from the 7-day rolling average for test positivity of 13% on 12/1/2020.

Once we have cases with exposure in schools, we would expect to see greater numbers of students and staff that need to be in quarantine in schools that have greater numbers of students in classrooms. This trend will likely accelerate as we have cold weather and more students have symptoms and are tested for COVID-19.



The high volume of new cases is now outstripping the ability of Gallatin City-County Health Department to conduct timely contact tracing. In the coming days and weeks, we will be adjusting our processes and building information resources in order to allow us to use the resources we do have for the greatest impact. That means we will be emphasizing ways to address cases that are most likely to affect higher-risk populations and priority settings, such as nursing homes, health care settings, and educational institutions (including K-12 schools and MSU). The Health Department will continue to expend all resources available, but schools officials and the community should be aware that we are no longer contacting all new cases within 24 hours and contact tracing of close contacts of known cases is significantly delayed.

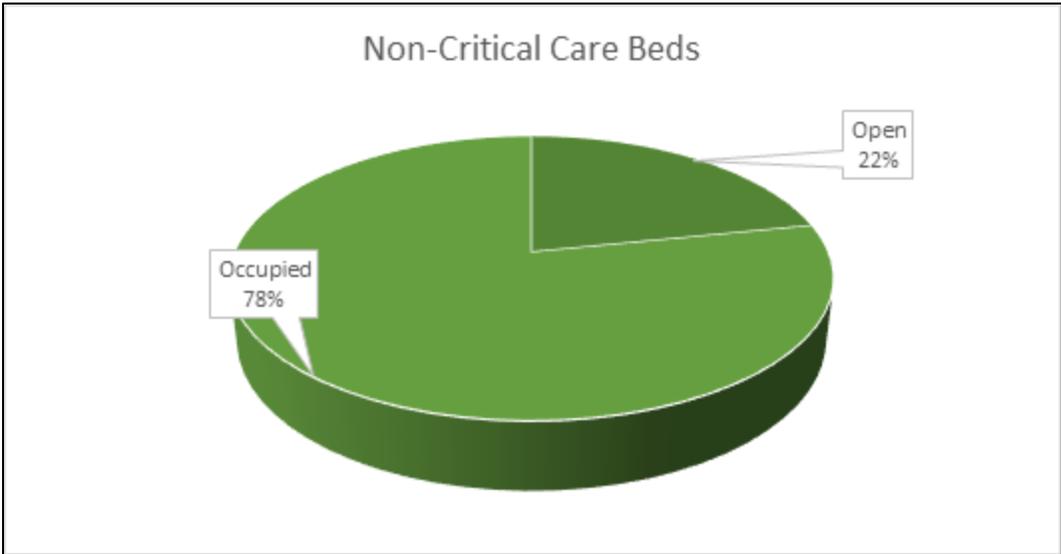
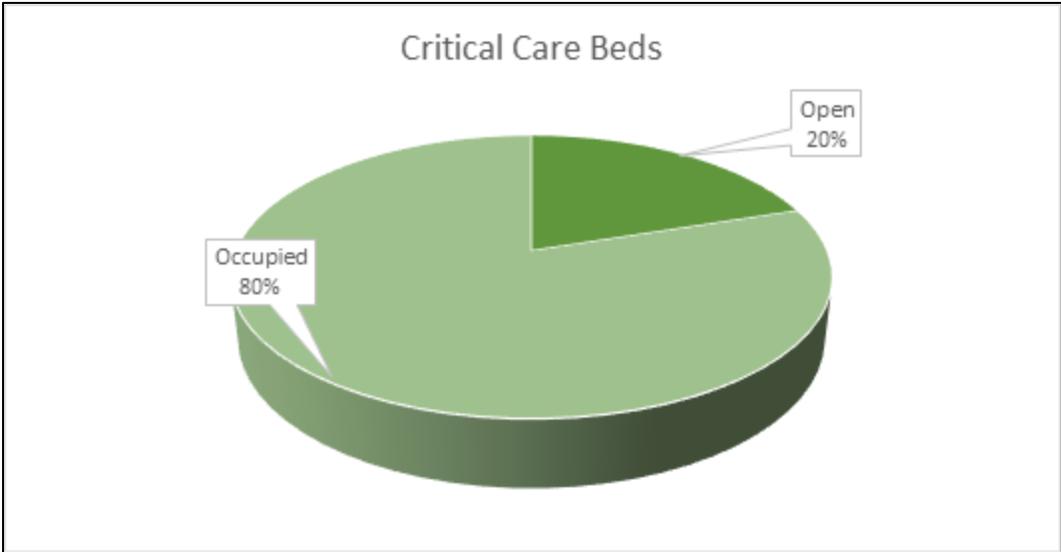
Secondary CDC indicators: The CDC guidance identifies a number of secondary indicators. These include the percent change in new cases per 100,000 population during the last 7 days compared with the previous 7 days. This is a measure designed to gauge the trajectory of our local epidemiology, whether our local case numbers are rising or falling. In Gallatin County, the most recent 7-day period (ending 12/10/2020) produced 447 cases per 100,000 residents. That was a 21% decrease compared to the prior 7-day period. These changes should be interpreted with caution due to the impact of the recent holiday (which reduced demand for testing) and a reduced number of cases associated with MSU's winter break. . For these reasons, the Health Department recommends interpreting this data with some caution.

| INDICATORS | Lowest risk of transmission in schools | Lower risk of transmission in schools | Moderate risk of transmission in schools | Higher risk of transmission in schools | Highest risk of transmission in schools |
|---|--|---------------------------------------|--|--|---|
| SECONDARY INDICATORS | | | | | |
| Percent change in new cases per 100,000 population during the last 7 days compared with the previous 7 days (negative values indicate improving trends) | <-10% | -10% to <-5% | -5% to <0% | 0% to ≤ 10% | >10% |

The CDC guidance also refers to the presence of localized community/public setting outbreaks, characterized as a sudden increase in the number of COVID-19 cases in a localized community or geographic area as determined by the local and state health department. Locally, as of 12/10/2020 we have recorded 203 cases in the past 72 hours.

Finally, the CDC guidance refers to a number of measures of local capacity within hospital and intensive care units. As of December 11, Gallatin County has 16 hospitalizations related to COVID-19 and the overall hospital census includes 80% occupancy of critical care beds and 78% of non-critical care beds (Bozeman Health Deaconess Hospital and Big Sky Medical Center). The two figures below describe the percentage of occupied and open critical care and non-critical care beds at Bozeman Health Deaconess Hospital and Big Sky Medical Center as of 12/11/2020.





While the rising percentage of beds occupied in non-critical care settings is noteworthy and will be monitored closely, Bozeman Health officials are confident in the hospital's current capacity to care for patients. These census figures fluctuate significantly day-to-day, particularly this time of year.

Please note the data contained in the report above are subject to change as more information regarding cases and lab tests become available through contact tracing or information sharing. GCCHD reserves the right to edit the format and content of this school supplement.

