HEALTHY GALLATIN

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

HUMAN SERVICES • 406.582.3100, hs@gallatin.mt.gov
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH • 406.582.3120, ehs@gallatin.mt.gov
WIC • 406.582.3115, wic@gallatin.mt.gov

healthygallatin.org

Supplementary K-12 School Information – February 12, 2021

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 440 new cases per 100,000 persons during the 14 days that ended on 2/11/2021.

Percentage of RT-PCR tests that are positive during the last 14 days: In Gallatin County, our test positivity rate for the two week period that ended 2/9/2021 was 4.4%. 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 5.7% during the period that ended 2/9/2021, a 7% increase from the 7-day rolling average for test positivity of 5.3% on 2/2/2021.

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.

Higher volumes of new cases taxes the ability of Gallatin City-County Health Department to conduct timely contact tracing. In the coming days and weeks, we will continue adjusting our processes and building information resources in order to allow us to use the resources we do have for the greatest impact. When case volumes are higher, 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). As case numbers decrease, contact tracing interviews will become more focused and extensive in order to reduce transmission. The Health Department will continue to expend all resources available, but schools officials and the community should be aware that we are not always able to contact new cases within 24 hours and contact tracing of close contacts of known cases is significantly delayed.

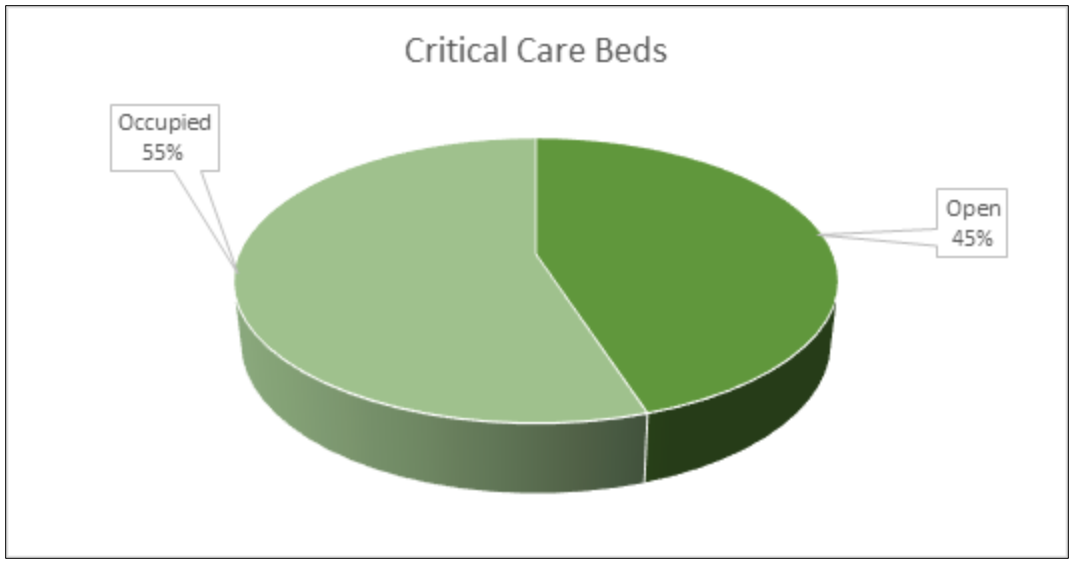
Secondary CDC indicators: The CDC guidance identifies a number of secondary indicators. These include the percent change in new cases per 100,000 population during the last 7 days compared with the previous 7 days. This is a measure designed to gauge the trajectory of our local epidemiology, whether our local case numbers are rising or falling. In Gallatin County, the most recent 7-day period (ending 2/9/2021) produced 228 cases per 100,000 residents. That was a 9% increase compared to the prior 7-day period.

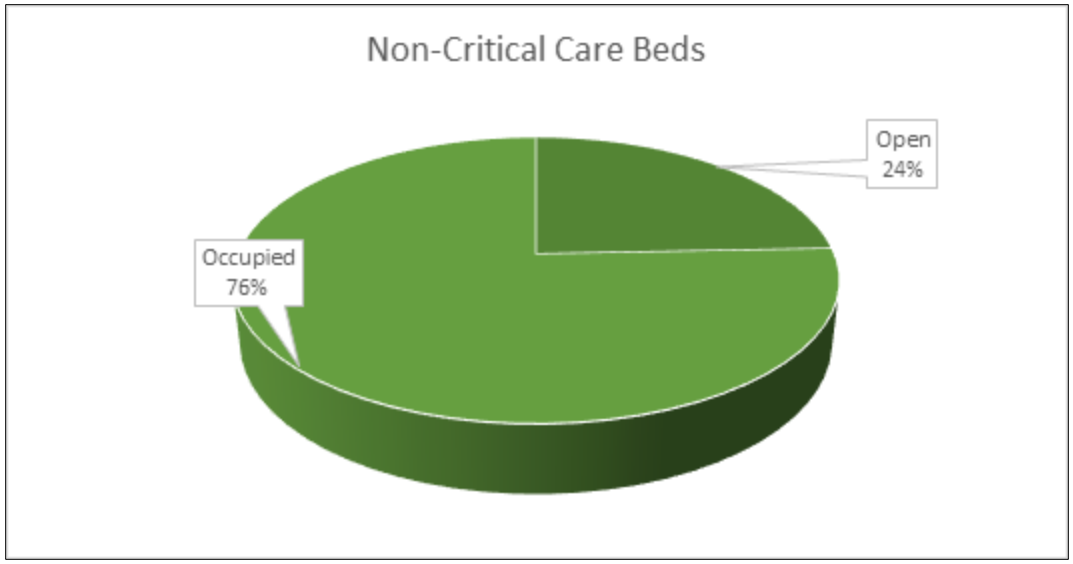
INDICATORS	Lowest risk of transmission in schools	Lower risk of transmission in schools	Moderate risk of transmission in schools	Higher risk of transmission in schools	Highest risk of transmission in schools
SECONDARY INDICATORS					
Percent change in new cases per 100,000 population during the last 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 2/11/2021 we have recorded 143 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 February 12, Gallatin County had 6 hospitalizations related to COVID-19 and the overall hospital census includes 55% occupancy of critical care beds and 76% 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 2/12/2021.

The trends of some community-level metrics, combined with the arrival of a limited number of vaccine doses, is encouraging. However, it is also important to be cognizant of rapid and widespread rise in cases, hospitalizations, and deaths nationally. In that spirit, the Health Department is advising all parts of the community to continue practicing basic prevention measures, including use of face coverings, social distancing when possible, regular and thorough hand washing, and urging sick people to stay home.





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.