HEALTHY GALLATIN

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Press Release
Board of Health To Consider Amending Local Public Health Rule

On Friday, March 12, 2021, the Gallatin City-County Board of Health will hold a special meeting to consider amending a COVID-19 related local public health rule to allow for increased group size limitations for events and group gatherings in Gallatin County.

The new rule, if approved by the Board, would increase gatherings for indoor events to no more than 150 people if event sponsors put in place certain physical distancing measures to protect participants and the public.

Under the draft rule, outdoor events of up to 250 people would be allowed with certain physical distancing measures in place. The physical distancing provisions in the rule include requirements that participants at indoor events with more than 50 people be seated at tables that are at least six feet apart with no more than six people per table.

Outdoor venues with more than 50 people would be required to organize the event to maintain six feet between individuals and family/household groups. Event sponsors would also be required to manage physical layout, ingress/egress, and flow of foot traffic in ways that allows attendees to maintain six-foot physical distancing. The rule would prohibit unstructured activities (such as dance floors) that encourage unpredictable social interactions that do not allow six feet of distance between participants.

The draft rule maintains a number of exemptions to the group size limitation, including those for houses of worship, K-12 schools and institutions of higher learning, youth participants at organized youth events, retail businesses that ensure predictable and manageable social interactions, government offices and operations, and established businesses such as restaurants, gyms, and other food services establishments subject to existing capacity requirements.

The draft rule also allows an exemption for museums, sit-down theaters, and outdoor competition venues with established seating arrangements that adhere to physical distancing guidelines that do not exceed 50% of capacity for the venue.

The Board of Health approved the existing rule in November and included group size limits intended to address events and gatherings that pose risk due to contact between people who otherwise would not be together if not for that event (meeting, party, festival, concert) being held.

The group size limits are not intended as a limitation on usual and customary work in office settings or workplaces that function as the primary place of work for a business or organization.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control & Prevention recommends that events and gatherings limit size in order to slow transmission.

The draft rule and other meeting materials can be found here.

Public comments can be submitted by emailing BOHPublicComment@gallatin.mt.gov. The Board will accept written comments until 4 PM on Thursday, March 11.

To participate virtually in Friday's meeting, please register here. Registration remains open through the meeting. 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 Monday through Saturday 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.