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Press Release
Board of Health Emergency Rules

At today's meeting of the Gallatin City-County Board of Health, the Board voted to extend [an emergency rule that was created on March 18 to last through April 24](#).

The extension brings the current local emergency rule into harmony with [Governor Steve Bullock's directive on April 7, 2020](#).

The Board also voted to adopt [a new emergency rule pertaining to isolation and quarantine](#) that requires people who have tested positive for COVID-19 to stay home, and for people who have been identified by the Health Department as close contacts to a known case to also stay home.

Gallatin County Health Officer Matt Kelley stressed that the isolation and quarantine rule would only be used to protect the public health in extremely rare cases where an individual will not or cannot comply with requirements to stay at home to limit spread of the disease. He said the rule is a tool that will only be used in situations where public health officials have no other options to protect the public.

The rule requires the following:

- All people with COVID-19 symptoms (fever, cough and/or difficulty breathing) who have a test result for COVID-19 pending or who have been identified by GCCHD as a close contact of someone who is a known case for COVID-19, **shall stay in a quarantine location**;
- All people who test positive for COVID-19 **must remain in isolation** at their home or recovery facility except to receive medical care and can only discontinue isolation after being released by GCCHD staff.

Isolation is a critical component of reducing the spread of COVID-19 by separating sick people with a contagious disease from people who are not sick.

Quarantine separates and restricts the movement of people who were exposed to a contagious disease to see if they become sick.



Conditions of quarantine and isolation are similar and include, **if possible**: keeping separated from people and animals; staying in a separate sick room; using a separate bathroom cleaning all high-touch surfaces daily; covering coughs and sneezes; washing hands often; avoiding sharing personal household items; getting food in a way that doesn't require face-to-face contact with others or entry into the isolation location; contacting a health care provider if symptoms worsen; avoiding public transportation and wearing a face mask when attending a medical appointment.

During the Board of Health meeting, Gallatin City-County Health Officer Matt Kelley said, "This is not something that I dreamed up on my own. This is something that other health departments in other parts of the state and other parts of the county are putting into place so that they can deal with significant and really difficult issues if and when they come up. Kelley added, "I haven't used it and I hope I don't have to use it."

Kelley said virtually everyone who is diagnosed with the disease has been extremely cooperative and doing their best to stay at home. In those cases, he said, people with the disease or sick and waiting test results will work with a public health nurse in a collaborative, patient-centered relationship.

The Board said the rule will give the Board of Health, County Attorney's Office and local law enforcement a tool to deal with the difficult, very rare situation where COVID patients who won't or can't be compliant with isolation or quarantine rules.

GCCHD staff contact every known positive patient in Gallatin County as part of their contact investigation, then reach out to anyone who has been in close contact with those patients. A team of GCCHD public health nurses and social workers then guides people throughout their time in isolation or quarantine, offering support to make sure their needs are met.

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 <https://www.healthygallatin.org/coronavirus-covid-19/>.

