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Press Release

New Weekly COVID-19 Surveillance Reports

Gallatin City-County Health Department (GCCHD) on Friday initiated publication of a weekly COVID-19 surveillance report to provide the community and policymakers with regular and predictable access to key community-level metrics to help inform decision making.

GCCHD plans to release the weekly report on Fridays and plans to continue refining and adding new data in the weeks ahead.

“This pandemic is a new frontier for everyone,” said Matt Kelley, Health Officer with Gallatin City-County Health Department. “By sharing additional metrics and epidemiologic data, we hope to help schools, government agencies, healthcare providers, businesses, and the community navigate a path forward that is informed by the best information available related to our local situation.”

The weekly report will offer updates on community measures that are complementary to information provided on the department’s daily COVID-19 dashboard. GCCHD intends to continue updating its daily dashboard. Kelley said the measures on the weekly report are best presented every seven days because the data will be more complete in that timeframe. Measures included in the initial weekly report include:

- **Daily and 7-day rolling average of daily COVID-19 cases per 100,000 residents:** This metric provides a way to measure Gallatin County’s daily cases as a rate that can be more easily compared to other communities and counties of varying population size.
- **Daily and 7-day rolling average of percent positive of COVID-19 tests:** This metric provides a way to show how many people who are tested for COVID-19 in Gallatin County are diagnosed with the disease. Public health experts say a positivity rate below 5% is optimal, and percentages above 10% may indicate higher levels of disease in the community that is not being detected by current testing levels.
- **Median time from specimen collection to results received by local public health:** This metric helps us understand the lag time between when someone gets swabbed for a COVID-19 diagnostic test and when positive tests are reported to Gallatin City-County Health Department. Results reports within 48 hours provide the best opportunity to conduct contact tracing that helps limit spread of the disease.



- **Time from report to GCCHD to start of contact investigation:** This metric measures the time required to start a contact tracing investigation from the time the report is received by GCCHD. Our goal is to start contact investigation within 24 hours from when the case is reported.
- **Symptom onset dates of Gallatin COVID-19 Cases:** While daily case reports involve some lag time between specimen collection and report to local public health, data showing onset dates of symptoms for those who have been diagnosed provide a more precise indicator of when people in the community became ill with the disease. This data is gathered during interviews with people who have been diagnosed and require some time to compile.
- **Cumulative COVID-19 cases by age group:** This chart provides a visual representation demonstrating the growth in numbers of cases for various age groups. Moving forward, this data may help build understanding about how the virus is spreading in different groups.

In future weeks, GCCHD intends to also include information in the reports showing cases reported in K-12 schools and at Montana State University. As of Friday, August 28, GCCHD had not received reports of any cases associated with K-12 schools. As of Wednesday, August 26, GCCHD had received reports of 31 cases associated with persons at MSU since the beginning of the current academic semester. Of those 31 cases, nine people had active disease as of Wednesday with others recovered and no longer contagious.

Reports will be posted to the [GCCHD website](#) and released to the media each Friday.

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](#).

