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Press Release
Board of Health Decision on Extending and Amending Local Health Rule

On Thursday, Feb. 4, the Gallatin City-County Board of Health extended its emergency public health rule that places operating restrictions on certain businesses in order to slow the spread of COVID-19. The new rule included amendment allowing bars, restaurants, and other licensed food and beverage establishments to operate until 2 AM.

The rule approved by the Board Thursday retains other significant requirements for businesses including:

- Limits of the number of patrons to 50% of capacity;
- Limits on party size at tables to 6 people (with an exception for families with young children);
- Requirements that staff and patrons wear face coverings within indoor areas unless they are seated at a table and at least six feet from other parties;
- Requirements that patrons remain seated and respect social distancing rules requiring at least six feet between tables.
- Businesses such as gyms/fitness centers, places of assembly, pools and spas are also limited to 50% capacity.

The Board's emergency rule also retains the countywide prohibition on physical group gatherings of more than 25 individuals for group events including but not limited to parties, weddings, receptions, conventions, meetings, fairs, festivals, and concerts. These restrictions apply to indoor and outdoor events.

The group size limitation is 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 prohibition is 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.



In a separate action on Jan. 27, the Board also extended its emergency health rule requiring individuals and organizations to use face coverings in most indoor public spaces. The face covering rule applied to all restaurants, bars, bowling alleys, and other establishments and requires use of face coverings by patrons whenever they are not seated at a table and socially distanced from other parties. The rule requires establishments to enforce the face covering rule and individuals to wear face coverings in most circumstances.

“The Board of Health is seeking to find a balance between important public health precautions that help slow down spread of COVID-19 and the economic and social benefits of allowing businesses to operate more extensively,” said Matt Kelley, Health Officer with Gallatin City-County Health Department.

During the meeting, Kelley cautioned that variant strains of the virus that causes COVID-19 continue to pose significant risk in the weeks and months ahead. He urged the public – including restaurant and bar owners and patrons – to continue to exercise great caution in order to help slow the spread of the virus and avoid lockdowns and closures that have been necessary in other nations as the variant forms of the virus have spread and caused hospitalizations and deaths.

Kelley asked the public to help slow the spread by leaving establishments that are not following protocols, and reporting evidence of clear violation to the health department [here](#).

“This pandemic is far from over,” Kelley said. “We need to work together to slow spread and keep businesses open.”

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](#).

