



Commissioners to Drop Covid Dial

Three weeks ago, your Teller County Board of County Commissioners, along with commissioners around the state, asked the State Department of Health and Governor Polis to be relieved of state health restrictions. Last week, the Board rescinded the Teller County Emergency Order because Teller County had entered a recovery and vaccination phase of the pandemic. Teller County has adequate supplies of PPE, testing supplies, trained staff and volunteers and is fully into the recovery phase and well along in its vaccination program. At the direction of the Teller County Board of Health, your Teller County Public Health Department developed a vaccination plan which followed state-issued CDPHE guidelines; we prioritized our medical teams, first responders, teachers, law enforcement teams and our most vulnerable population- those above 65 and those with pre-existing conditions. Ten days ago, we began vaccinating our general population, 18 and above, and to date, we have vaccinated over 70% of our over-65 population and 25% of our general population. We are firmly in a recovery phase. Based on our request, along with several other counties, our proven record of performance and the outstanding cooperation of Teller County residents, we have been informed by the state that local control will be reinstated on or about April 16, 2021. While the final details are being worked now, we thought it prudent to inform our residents directly as soon as possible.

The Teller County Board of County Commissioners remains dedicated to the ongoing physical, mental, and economic health of our community. We continue to encourage all residents and businesses to take personal responsibility for their own health and help fight the spread of COVID-19.

We have all endured a long and difficult road during the pandemic. Teller County has suffered the loss of 15 of our residents, including the Mayor of Woodland Park to this disease. In addition, we have lost 17 of our community members to suicide. We have seen a rise in domestic violence, child and elder abuse and severe economic impact that we must equally weigh in Teller County's recovery efforts. Solutions and efforts are being directed in all of these areas by Teller County and our cities, but to be most effective, local control is essential. We will use informed and tailored solutions applicable to a rural environment and shaped by our unique situation. We applaud the state's efforts in regards to supply chain improvements and overall direction, but as we regain local control, your local government will be the most responsive and effective response to a return to normalcy.

Teller County's actions and the cooperation of each and every one of you, will work together to mitigate the effects of the pandemic, prevent further spread, and protect our combined medical resources from being overwhelmed. The Teller County Board of County Commissioners is

working hard to minimize the disruption to our daily lives by applying a localized approach to conditions on the ground in Teller County.

In anticipation of Teller County regaining local control, the Teller County Board of County Commissioners as the Board of Health, has worked with Public Health officials, local community leaders, local medical professionals, and other stakeholders to develop a local plan tailored to Teller County and the needs of our families, businesses and visitors. **Based on this approach we will no longer be using or adhering to the state mandated color dial and its associated restrictions.** Our localized approach will be conditions-based and will seek a balance between life, health and the overall welfare and well-being of our citizens, without a dial arbitrarily increasing or decreasing restrictions.

The main guiding principles in the Teller County approach to managing the effects of COVID-19 on our community is the respect for each other as individuals and the importance of personal responsibility to take appropriate steps to protect ourselves at a level we feel comfortable. This includes respect for those who may have pre-existing conditions or businesses that choose more restrictive measures as we move through the recovery phase. Our intent is to provide flexibility that is grounded in medical science and actual conditions in Teller County.

Those people who have been fully vaccinated can now reasonably expect a level of normalcy that has not existed in Colorado or our County for over a year now. While the state mandate to wear a mask remains in effect for a few more weeks, once it is lifted, if you as an individual are comfortable not wearing a mask or gathering with friends and family, please do so respectfully. If you and your loved ones choose to continue wearing a mask or limiting gatherings for the protection of yourself and others, please do so responsibly. The Teller County Board of County Commissioners continues to believe that the citizens of Teller County are capable of exercising personal responsibility and making meaningful and safe decisions with respect to their personal health circumstances, jobs, businesses and personal lives and will do so far better than government.

For those who have chosen not to be vaccinated, your personal choice is respected. That said, your risk is higher, and you will need to take extra precautions to protect yourself from falling ill to the COVID-19 virus.

The Teller County Board of County Commissioners as the Board of Health will continue to actively monitor COVID-19 data trends and collaborate with local leaders, appropriate business owners and the State on prudent science-driven responses that continue to balance the community's needs to preserve both lives and livelihoods. We stand firmly with you, shoulder to shoulder, as we move through the recovery phase of this pandemic. Thank you for your continued cooperation, understanding, and incredible support. We continue to applaud our medical community, first responders, public health department, our heroic volunteers, and county and city staffs.

Bob Campbell Dan Williams Erik Stone