



# Panhandle Health District

*Healthy People in Healthy Communities*

**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

**Panhandle Health District**



## Panhandle Health District Position Statement

**July 8, 2020**

The Panhandle Health District 1 Board of Health (“PHD”) acknowledges the significant recent increase in District 1 COVID-19 infected case numbers. This increase in case numbers will significantly increase COVID-19 illness in our community and the resulting increased demands on healthcare, as well as having a negative impact on business activity, personal interactions and related activities. There is also the potential for the increased infections to overwhelm our regional healthcare capacity.

Based upon previous research with influenza virus, SARS-CoV-1, MERS-CoV, and evolving research with COVID-19, PHD strongly endorses community-wide masking, social (physical) distancing, and repeated proper hand hygiene (properly wash hands, use hand sanitizer, keep hands away from face).

Ongoing research regarding the spread of infective viruses documents that such viruses are released in droplets during exhalation, coughing, and even talking. Research indicates that such droplets can be small enough to remain aloft in the air.

In light of the serious danger and implications due to this recent significant increase in COVID-19 infected cases, PHD strongly recommends that our community members be consistent and vigilant in practicing the following:

- On a Community-wide basis use masking, social (physical) distancing, and repeated proper hand hygiene (properly wash hands, use hand sanitizer, keep hands away from face).
- Make sure that all indoor gathering sites provide sufficient and effective ventilation, particularly in public buildings, workplace environments, schools, hospitals, and aged care homes (opening both doors and windows can dramatically increase airflow rates in many buildings).
- Avoid overcrowding, particularly in public transport and in public buildings.

Hayden – Kootenai County 8500 N. Atlas Rd. Hayden, ID 83835 208.415.5100	Sandpoint – Bonner County 2101 W. Pine St. Sandpoint, ID 83864 208.263.5159	Kellogg – Shoshone County 35 Wildcat Way Kellogg, ID 83837 208.786.7474	Bonnars Ferry – Boundary County 7402 Caribou St. Bonnars Ferry, ID 83805 208.267.5558	St. Maries – Benewah County 137 N. 8 <sup>th</sup> St. St. Maries, ID 83861 208.245.4556
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-When possible, provide supplemental general ventilation with airborne infection control such as local exhaust and high efficiency air filtration.

-It is recommended that local businesses require masking by their employees in all situations where self-isolation (i.e. private offices) is not possible, require (or at least encourage) patrons to wear a mask upon entry to the establishments (particularly when physical distancing is not possible), keep surfaces in the business effectively clean, and provide hand sanitizer for employees and patrons.

Individuals should use masks in public when they cannot accomplish physical distancing of at least 6 feet. Such mask use can reduce case transmission.

PHD also continues to endorse increasing testing availability, as well as ongoing case identification and epidemiologic tracking.

PHD will continue to monitor the situation and while not currently endorsing mandatory rules and/or a COVID-19 Recovery Stage roll-back, PHD may consider such actions if necessary to protect the health of our community.