

January 5, 2021 Business Update from Larimer County Department of Health and Environment

In conversations with the Larimer County Department of Health & Environment regarding the current COVID-19 situation, we'd like to share the following information with you.

As the Omicron variant of COVID-19 becomes the dominant strain in our community, LCDHE expects cases to drastically increase over the next several weeks. Between last week and this week both the 7 day case rate and the percent positivity have doubled, and the percent positivity is at the highest it's been since March 2020 at 22%.

This surge is likely to be short-lived, however our community will experience disruptions due to the sheer number of cases. LCDHE wants to be clear that they do not plan to place any capacity restrictions on businesses in the coming weeks. LCDHE is aware that some businesses have already experienced staff shortages due to illness and strongly recommends that businesses develop plans for the likelihood that they may experience significant disruptions in their operations.

With the omicron variant and [CDC's updated guidance on isolation and quarantine](#), more than ever, people need to get vaccinated and receive boosters, wear high quality masks indoors, as well as wash hands, and social distance.

LCDHE continues to prioritize that:

- Children remain learning in-person at schools and child cares with minimal disruptions
- Hospitals maintain sufficient resources to meet all critical health care needs in our community
- Essential services are maintained with minimal disruptions

As Omicron displaces Delta, the rising case numbers are causing proportionately fewer hospitalizations and reducing demand for acute care. However, based on the experience of other countries, LCDHE anticipates that hospitalizations will eventually rise as the case rate continues to climb, despite the relative decrease in severity from Delta to Omicron.

LCDHE also wants to ensure that essential services are maintained and that businesses continue to thrive during this surge. In an effort to keep local workers safer, limited high grade surgical masks may be available to businesses that can not offer remote work options. Please submit [this form](#) to request these.

In Larimer County, masks are required in indoor public spaces. LCDHE recommends that individuals use well-fitting surgical, KN95, KF94, or FFP2 type masks.

LCDHE strongly recommends that everyone:

- Get vaccinated and boosted soon as possible, if eligible.
- Monitor for symptoms and stay home if feeling sick; do not go to work or school.

- Get [tested](#) if having COVID-19 symptoms or if exposed.
- Consider rapid testing before gathering with others.
- Postpone indoor gatherings, or if you do plan to gather, consider:
 - Taking things outside or increasing ventilation and filtration if indoors
 - Encouraging everyone to be vaccinated and boosted
 - Minimizing the number of people gathering

LCDHE advises businesses to do the following during this surge:

- Offer remote work (virtual) options wherever possible
- Practice social distancing
- Develop plans for initiated closures due to the likelihood businesses may experience a lack of available staff due to the very high case rate.

Join us for a COVID-19 update from LCDHE

The Fort Collins and Loveland Area Chambers of Commerce are hosting a business question and answer session with Tom Gonzales, the Director of the Larimer County Department of Health and Environment. The Omicron variant is causing cases to rise in our community. Join us to learn how this impacts your business.

Spanish interpretation will be available.

Friday, January 7 at 10:30am

[Zoom Link](#)

Call-In Number: 1-253-215-8782