

Larimer County Mitigation Plan

To: Jill Hunsaker Ryan, MPH, Executive Director, CDPHE
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From: Larimer County Department of Health and Environment

Re: Larimer County COVID-19 Mitigation Plan

Date: October 13, 2020

Larimer County has achieved success based on the strong collaboration and commitment of our partners. Going forward our success in maintaining our status and if necessary, our mitigation plan, will only be successful as an entire community. We have regular scheduled updates and discussions with our elected officials-municipalities, county commissioners and state officials. Together, we have outlined a robust outreach, education and compliance program, as well as a strong campaign to keep our businesses open by following public health guidelines. We have a robust partnership with CSU that involves a shared contact tracing approach and a significant amount of testing for students both on campus and off campus. We work effectively with our healthcare partners, Banner, UC Health, Salud and CSU Health Network for information and data sharing and to provide testing options throughout the county. This Mitigation Plan highlights many of these successes and additional strategies to enhance our efforts moving forward.

Variance & Mitigation Framework

Describe in detail the county's existing mitigation framework and triggers defined in your approved variance(s). This should include the metrics used by CDPHE to monitor for variance threshold compliance.

Larimer County has a mitigation framework currently in place which includes:

Collaboration

- *Level III (Remote) Activation of the Larimer County EOC-another major plus, city and county managers, enforcement all participate-highlight under communication and enforcement/compliance*

- Outreach to our community members by sectors, including weekly elected official calls, weekly business Q&A sessions with business owners and operators, weekly discussions with our schools, biweekly local healthcare coalition calls which includes OEMS from all municipalities within Larimer County and even Weld County

Testing

- Community testing sites conducting specimen collections for PCR testing three days per week
 - Other healthcare systems conduct testing to members of the community as well (UCHealth, Banner Health, Estes Park Health, Salud, and other healthcare clinics)
 - A partnership with these organizations has allowed LCDHE to coordinate our testing efforts with these organizations
- Working with private labs to continue a turnaround time within 24-48 hours for results

Data/Surveillance

- A public-facing dashboard to provide up-to-the-date data for our community, including number of cases, 14-day case rate per 100k, 14-day testing positivity rate, demographic data, list of facilities currently experiencing outbreaks, hospital data, and testing data that is continuously added to and expanded
 - This dashboard includes the state dial showing the community the status of Larimer County according to the State's Protect Our Neighbors program
- Engagement with our local major hospital systems on a daily basis and monitoring of COVID-19-specific data

Containment

- A robust contact tracing and active monitoring system
- An outbreak team working with businesses as soon as one case has been identified to be associated with a business, long term care facility or organization

Enforcement/compliance

- A compliance/enforcement team following up with requests for or complaints requiring on-site visits and calls
- A partnership with city and county managers in which the municipalities and law enforcement agencies participate in enforcement efforts

Communication

- A Joint Information Center based out of the Larimer County Department of Health and Environment building to answer questions and address complaints

Larimer County has identified and continues to monitor a group of early warning indicators. These indicators, as outlined in Larimer County's Suppression Plan, are as follows:

1. New COVID Positive Cases County-wide

Based on testing data reports from CEDRS (Colorado's reporting system used to track COVID cases), LCDHE receives reports of more than 25 new cases or 10% of individuals tested on three separate days over a 14 day period.

2. 14-Day Case Rate per 100k

Based on the number of cases in Larimer County per 100,000 residents, the county identifies more than 75 cases per 100k in a 14 day period.

3. 14-Day Testing Positivity Rate

Based on the number of tests conducted and the results received, the county identifies a positivity rate of 5% or greater in a 14 day period.

4. New COVID-19 Presumptive Positive Admits to Hospitals

Based on daily hospital data provided to the Larimer EOC, hospitals report 15 new hospital admits per day of presumptive positive cases on three separate days over a 14 day period.

5. Number of COVID Patients in the Hospitals

Based on daily hospital data provided to the Larimer EOC, hospitals report more than 65 patients are being treated for COVID throughout the two major hospital systems in Larimer County.

6. Hospital Census Rates (both Total and ICU)

Hospitals county-wide are required to maintain a daily occupancy of less than 70% in order to continue providing elective procedures. Based on the daily hospital data provided to the Larimer EOC, if we see hospitals at 80% occupancy, this is a trigger to begin a detailed review of where patients are coming from and what may be causing the surge. If hospitals achieve 90% occupancy, this is a trigger to reinstate more restrictive social distancing practices and would be a trigger to activate an ACS. If we see hospitals at 100%, this would trigger the reinstatement of emergency protective actions.

Community Goals

Describe in detail the overall community goals for COVID-19, and any and all response efforts that have been implemented to date.

1. Identify and contain the spread of COVID-19 through aggressive contact tracing, isolation and quarantine of affected community members, active monitoring, increased testing capacity, enforcement, and strong public messaging
2. Mitigate the impacts of COVID-19 on our healthcare systems through strong partnerships with health agencies and hospitals, the evaluation of early warning indicators to determine impacts, and by providing logistical support for the sheltering and care of impacted people
3. Provide guidance to the community on the latest local and state public health orders

In order to accomplish the goals listed above, Larimer County has utilized an Incident Command Structure, in partnership between Larimer County Office of Emergency Management and Larimer County Department of Health and Environment. Functions in the

form of Planning, Logistical, and Finance support has been provided by Larimer County OEM, while operational activities have been conducted by LCDHE staff. Operations has been broken up into four task forces listed below with descriptions of their assigned tasks:

- Case Investigation and Contact Monitoring (CICM) Team: tasked with conducting investigations of cases reported into CEDRS within 24 hours of reporting, and contact interviews for each contact identified within 48 hours following the case investigation
 - A CICM database has been developed by Larimer County IT to allow us to assign cases, collect notes, trace contacts to cases, and report interview information that can easily be uploaded into CEDRS
- Outbreak Task Force: tasked with following up with each business, long term care facility, or organization after a case has been associated with one of their facilities to discuss current protocols in place, and work with the facility to provide guidance through the outbreak protocols and provide technical expertise once a business has met outbreak criteria (defined as 2 or more cases)
- Testing Task Force: tasked with operating the community-wide testing site run by LCDHE, notifying all community members of negative results, and working with community partners to identify other testing strategies. The team has developed a Strategic Testing Roadmap to outline long term testing efforts for Larimer County
- Compliance Task Force: tasked with providing outreach and education to businesses in Larimer County to ensure understanding and compliance of current guidance and orders, as well as conducting enforcement activities, such as issuance of Notices of Violations and Closures, when compliance is not being achieved

Larimer County communications efforts, including providing a means in which the public can provide feedback and ask questions, are primarily conducted through a Joint Information Center which is staffed Monday-Friday. LCDHE provides continuous outreach to businesses, schools, long term care facilities, hospital systems, and other organizations to provide situational awareness and guidance.

Larimer County Department of Health and Environment also requires plan submissions and conducts plan reviews for any public gatherings over 10 attendees, indoor and outdoor events, personal services operations, malls, day camps, residential camps, and graduations to ensure they meet guidance and requirements approved by the State.

Disease Trends

Describe in detail the current disease trends the county is facing.

Larimer County has seen an increase in cases since the beginning of September with the average age of cases now below 30. Many of the more recent cases over the last week have been associated with social gatherings and community transmission. The positivity rate of testing remains around 2.5% which is where it has remained over the past several months. Up until this last week, hospital utilization rates had remained unaffected despite the rise in case numbers. Specifically, the number of COVID patients admitted to the hospital has

remained between 5-15 per day. However, many of the cases currently in the hospitals are from areas outside of the county, including neighboring states (Nebraska, Wyoming and South Dakota). With the increase in cases, we have seen a rise in facilities meeting outbreak criteria within the community. Many employees have reported to have close contact interactions with other staff outside of work.

Mitigation Steps

Mitigation steps should define the individual components of the LPHAs mitigation strategy, including but not limited to community partnerships, increased isolation and quarantine capacities, and communication plans. Each step should include as much detail as possible regarding process and actions, relevant stakeholders, and applicable timeframes.

LCDHE has implemented the following steps to ensure alignment with the LPHA's mitigation strategy as outlined above, and to work toward continued sustained suppression of COVID-19 in Larimer County:

Collaboration

Community Partnerships

- Larimer County Department of Health and Environment has developed and maintained strong community partnerships with the hospital systems, long term care facilities, emergency managers, municipalities, colleges/universities, schools, and businesses throughout this response
- LCDHE continues to host a number of routine calls with different partners to include:
 - i. Incident briefings with the Larimer County Office of Emergency Management twice per week, with the ability to conduct more if the need arises;
 - ii. Weekly COVID update calls with Larimer County elected officials;
 - iii. Weekly Business Q&A sessions with business owners and operators;
 - iv. Weekly economic development calls with workforce development groups within our municipalities;
 - v. Weekly meetings with members of CSU's Pandemic Team;
 - vi. Weekly COVID update and planning meetings with Larimer County school districts; and
 - vii. Biweekly COVID update calls with the NOCO Healthcare Coalition comprised of hospitals, long term care facilities, emergency managers, schools/universities, and other ambulatory service providers throughout Larimer and Weld Counties.
- LCDHE continues the development of a response Situation Report in collaboration with planning support from Larimer OEM that is issued every Friday of each week. This report is issued to all emergency response partners and the CDHSEM (via WebEOC) to provide continual updates, show trends, and provide situational awareness for partners.
- Larimer County has worked extremely closely with the local hospital systems to monitor hospital and PPE utilization.
- The business community has taken COVID-19 seriously, and the enforcement of our local face covering order relies heavily on businesses to enforce. LCDHE, the county and municipalities are working together to continue a regional communication approach to remind the community of the

restrictions in place and support businesses in enforcement in response to residents and businesses seeing more face covering fatigue. Additionally, this communication works to ensure that both businesses and the general community understands the risk to our variance if our early warning indicators continue to be met.

- LCDHE, the county economic and workforce development team, economic and small business chambers of local municipalities, as well as communications representatives from across the county continue to meet regularly to discuss strategies for continuing the economy functioning while protecting the community and continuing to remain below our early warning indicators.
- LCDHE has met with the county economic and workforce development team, economic and small business chambers of local municipalities weekly since May, but has recently shifted to support the business community in the importance of following restrictions and keeping case counts low. This is reiterated weekly in the business town halls we lead with the business community. A new face covering campaign for the whole county rolled out to stress guidance and remind people to take restrictions seriously.
- Upcoming outreach will be focused on specific populations that have gaps in education and knowledge around COVID. Assessments are being completed, with the goal to have communication plans developed within the next month.

Testing

Increase Community-Wide Testing

- LCDHE continues to operate a community-wide testing site three days per week; Tuesdays and Fridays in Fort Collins and Wednesdays in Loveland
- LCDHE is developing a mobile testing operation to make testing more accessible and that can be deployed in response to outbreaks or large exposure events
- LCDHE has partnered with CSU to test the samples collected by LCDHE at their Veterinary Diagnostic Lab and is working with CSU to integrate their reporting system into the Salesforce tool mentioned above
- LCDHE is currently partnering with Colorado State University (CSU) and several wastewater treatment plants on wastewater micro-surveillance testing to help understand the spread of the virus in the community. We anticipate the new technology will assist in early detection of active virus spread and ultimately in assessing the prevalence of the infection in Larimer county. The wastewater micro-surveillance is part of our Strategic Testing Roadmap which includes ongoing active RT-PCR by LCDHE and ongoing testing by our partners at UC Health, Banner and Salud.
- The amount of people getting tested has dramatically increased in the last few weeks. In addition, any case contact is encouraged to go get tested, and this continues to return positive results as asymptomatic individuals get tested. LCDHE will continue to encourage testing in the community.
- Additionally, testing sites are currently set up at UCHealth Harmony Campus, UCHealth Medical Center of the Rockies, Banner Health Fort Collins Medical Center, Estes Park Health, Salud Family Clinic in West Fort Collins, Salud Family Clinic in Estes Park, Timberline Urgent Care in Estes Park

- CSU is committed to completing investigation and contact tracing within the required time frames set by CDPHE - primary case interview completed within 24 hours and case closure within 48 hours of the case being assigned/identified. If the university's team is unable to complete cases within that timeframe, the public health team will evaluate options with LCDHE. These options may include:
 - i. Changing in-person classes to hybrid classes, which are a combination of in-person classes and those delivered virtually.
 - ii. Increasing the number or percentage of online classes.
 - iii. Temporarily moving to remote classes for a period of two weeks.
 - iv. As a last resort, suspending on campus learning before the scheduled date (November 20) after which students will complete their semester remotely.
- Finally, LCDHE is working with community partners to winterize our testing operations for our community-wide site

Data/Surveillance

Utilize Demographic Data to Adjust Plans and Outreach Appropriately

- A population epidemiologist has provided continuous demographic data analysis throughout the COVID response to assist with targeting outreach efforts
- The public-facing Dashboard has been utilized to monitor the previously identified early warning indicators and includes demographic data pulled from contact tracing efforts to target response efforts
- LCDHE and Larimer County IT are currently developing school-specific data to capture and present on the Dashboard in order to monitor school impacts
- Thus far, CSU's research demonstrates that the vast majority of transmission takes place in small gatherings of friends. Small gatherings are defined as less than 10 people. At this time there is very little evidence of classroom transmission.
- However, the City of Fort Collins looks very different from the rest of the county by age. Fifty percent of Fort Collins cases are within the 18-24 year old age group. Whereas, 15 percent of the City of Loveland's cases are within the 18-24 year old group. We are seeing modest growth in cases across all ages, except for the 18-24 yr old group in Fort Collins.
- From September 1 to October 13 the City of Loveland has seen a 28% increase in cases and Fort Collins an increase of 23% compared to July 15 - August 31.
 - We will continue to monitor these trends and adjust our outreach plans accordingly.

Containment

Larimer County Department of Health and Environment Full-Time COVID Response Team

- A staffing plan has been developed based on the current structure for the LCDHE COVID response funded by COVID grants.
- Team consists of 31 staff members to conduct case investigations and contact tracing, outbreak investigation, testing operations,

compliance/outreach, and data analysis to supplement staff already dedicated to this response.

- These roles will be filled until COVID operations are no longer needed or funding no longer exists.
- As needs arise (more contact tracers for example) more people are hired.

Increase Disease Investigation, Contact Tracing, and Isolation/Quarantine Monitoring and Support

- Colorado State University's public health team and LCDHE work together daily to investigate and contact trace COVID-19-positive university students and employees. Approximately 4600 students live on campus, 24,000 live off campus in Fort Collins or in other communities, and 7000 employees live in Fort Collins and the surrounding area. Where students and employees are located must be factored into joint CSU/County mitigation strategies.
- CSU is committed to completing investigation and contact tracing within the required time frames set by CDPHE - primary case interview completed within 24 hours and case closure within 48 hours of the case being assigned/identified. If the university's team is unable to complete cases within that timeframe, the public health team will evaluate options with LCDHE. These options may include:
 - i. Changing in-person classes to hybrid classes, which are a combination of in-person classes and those delivered virtually.
 - ii. Increasing the number or percentage of online classes.
 - iii. Temporarily moving to remote classes for a period of two weeks.
 - iv. As a last resort, suspending on campus learning before the scheduled date (November 20) after which students will complete their semester remotely.
- Larimer County IT has developed a system, using the Salesforce platform, that integrates contact tracing, outbreak and testing efforts for the entire county into one system. This system allows us to collect data and report information through one system.
 - i. The Contact Tracing Task Force is able to assign cases to team members for investigation and will collect information of close contacts and tie them to the cases in this system
 - ii. The Outbreak Task Force is able to identify employers associated with each case and report information from the employer into this system. The system is also able to download outbreak reports for submission to CDPHE.
 - iii. The Testing Task Force is able to register individuals who are to be tested through the community testing site run by LCDHE and to notify registered individuals of their results automatically
 - iv. This tool continues to be modified to support the needs of the COVID response efforts
- LCDHE is in the process of training additional Health Department staff to support the contact tracing team when a surge in new cases occurs
- LCDHE has also been working with a temp agency to quickly provide additional support when LCDHE has reached its capacity to follow up with cases and contacts in a timely manner

Enforcement/compliance

Increase Enforcement Efforts

- LCDHE's Compliance Task Force provides field staff for site visits following complaints when compliance cannot be achieved from initial outreach and follow up
- The focus of the Compliance Task Force is to enforce social distancing, wearing of face coverings and no large gatherings unless approved by LCDHE.
- LCDHE has reached out to all municipalities, law enforcement, and Code Compliance teams to assist in enforcement efforts around face coverings and public health order compliance. LCDHE will continue to work with them to expand enforcement in the community.
- LCDHE and The Larimer County Sheriff's Office and other local law enforcement agencies will work together to serve quarantine and isolation orders as LCDHE has recently seen an increase in non-compliance to these orders. With law enforcement issuing the order, community members will likely take the public health orders more seriously.
- CSU is enhancing its efforts to increase student compliance with social gatherings on campus and working with the LCDHE and the City of Fort Collins to do the same for students who live off campus. At this time, the vast majority of gatherings are small groups of friends.
- The vast majority of students in quarantine or isolation are following requirements. CSU aggressively monitors the movements of students who are quarantined or isolated. CSU is stepping up efforts to intervene if those requirements are not followed. This may include student conduct code action or asking the county for assistance to order enforcement.
- The CSU pandemic team will quarantine residence hall floors, wings or entire halls as appropriate when there is evidence of potential transmission in the hall. This would be evident by the outbreak definition in residence halls for Higher Education.

Communication

Increase Outreach and Education Efforts

- LCDHE still has a JIC stood up for community members to contact the Health Department for questions and concerns
- LCDHE has hired three Outreach Specialists to increase outreach and education efforts
- LCDHE has hired bilingual contact tracers and a LatinX Outreach Specialist based on the demographic data gathered
- The COVID response plan and outreach strategies will continue to be modified based on the changing demographics
- Outreach is currently focused on two primary populations, the LatinX community and the 18-24 age range. LatinX is a higher risk population and the 18-24 age range is where we are seeing the biggest increase in cases.

Timeline

This section should include a comprehensive list of dates and corresponding actions that demonstrate a clear timeline for mitigation, including future dates and actions. Please include as much detail as possible.

Example:

Date	<i>October 7, 2020 met with CDPHE and local partners to discuss current status</i>
Date	<i>October 9, 2020 met with Larimer County Sheriff about issuing quarantine and isolation orders October 12, 2020 met with law enforcement partners about education and enforcement.</i>
Date	<i>October 13, 2020 - submission of updated mitigation plan to CDPHE</i>
Date(s)	<i>October 27, 2020 (Reassessment)</i>

Not Yet Approved