

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Big Horn County Mask Mandate to Remain in Place

Wearing masks has helped improve the case numbers in the County

HARDIN, MONTANA (February 12, 2021) – The Big Horn County Board of Commissioners today announced that the current Public Health Order 2021-1, passed during its meeting January 15, 2021, will remain in effect. This Order includes a mask mandate, which requires individuals to wear a mask when outside the confines of their homes, particularly when shopping or participating in some other indoor activity.

“The Big Horn County Commissioners believe that the increase in people wearing masks has helped lower the number of new cases of the virus in the County,” said Larry Vandersloot, Chairman of the Big Horn County Board of Commissioners and Public Health Board. “Just this week, the CDC recommended that Americans double mask to protect against the new strains of the coronavirus starting to appear across the country. We believe that continued encouragement to wear masks is in the best interests of our community’s health.”

To view the full order, please visit the Big Horn County website at

<https://www.bighorncountymt.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Order-of-BHC-Public-Health-Officer-2021-1.pdf>.

“The benefits of mask-wearing during this pandemic have been widely studied by the scientific community and shown to be one of the best ways to prevent spread of disease,” said Dr. Carol Greimann, Public Health Officer. “We are not only seeing a slowing of new COVID-19 cases in Big Horn County, we have also seen a precipitous drop in influenza this flu season. While we still have several months before we reach vaccination levels that will allow us to return to a more normal way of life, we are asking residents and visitors to our County to wear a mask, especially for our elders who have been so devastated by COVID-19.”

Let’s keep the new case numbers low! Even if you have received the vaccine against COVID-19, it is important to follow the three W’s: Wash your hands; Watch your distance from other people; Wear a mask. The County asks all residents to please continue stay home more often and to avoid events or gatherings. Also, the Board of County Commissioners and Board of Public Health ask everyone to wear a mask and social distance when outside of their homes and in public.

Tracking down contacts to a positive case (contact tracing) is one of the best tools public health can use to slow the spread of the virus. If you believe you were in the presence of a recently confirmed COVID-19 case for more than five (5) minutes, please call public health so that a nurse may interview you and determine what level of exposure you have:

- IHS Public Health Nursing: (406) 638-3478
- Big Horn County Public Health: (406) 665-8720

To schedule an appointment with the Big Horn County Health Department for a COVID-19 vaccine, please call [406-665-8777](tel:406-665-8777) and leave a message with your name (please spell your name), age, date of birth, phone number, phase that you think you should be in for vaccination (1A, 1B, 1C or 2), and your pre-existing conditions. **OR** [click on the following link](#) to use our Google doc for fast, easy registration for phases 1C or 2:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSe2pyXknzY7rpvpED8FPtRcq42ehCyswRsemwQ1D0TvJPP9Ag/viewform?usp=sf_link

Please visit our Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/BHCMTResponds> for more information on how to schedule your COVID-19 vaccination in Big Horn County.

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Big Horn County is the sixth largest county in Montana, at approximately 5,023 square miles, and with a population exceeding 13,000. The local government was established January 13, 1913. Hardin is the County Seat. <https://www.bighorncountymt.gov/> For more information about the County's COVID-19 response, please visit our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/BHCMTResponds>.