



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

RILEY COUNTY LOCAL HEALTH OFFICER ISSUES AN ORDER PROHIBITING PUBLIC GATHERINGS OF MORE THAN 10 PEOPLE

(RILEY COUNTY, KS – March 20, 2020. There is now **one confirmed** case of the Coronavirus commonly known as COVID-19 in Riley County. Per her authority through Kansas State Statute 65-119, the Local Health Officer, Julie Gibbs, issues this order prohibiting all public gatherings of more than 10 people, whether indoors or outdoors, in Riley County effective at 12:01 A.M. on Saturday, March 21, 2020 unless otherwise exempted below. This order prohibiting public gatherings shall remain in effect until at least April 4th, 2020.

The following gatherings are exempt from this order, but may be restricted or banned in the future:

A prohibited “public gathering” does not include a non-commercial and lawful gathering entirely indoors and within a private living space.

A prohibited “public gathering” does not include licensed and lawfully operated medical service provider offices, hospitals, clinics and pharmacies.

A prohibited “public gathering” does not include grocery and/or convenience stores, provided proper “social distancing” is maintained at all times under then-existing CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) or KDHE (Kansas Department of Health & Education) guidelines.

A prohibited “public gathering” does not include local, state or federal governmental operations, in public buildings, provided their operations are in compliance with the local health officer’s orders which have been issued with regard to their conduct of public business.

A prohibited “public gathering” does not include operations or events at or within commercial spaces, whether indoors or outdoors where persons are gathered in groups of less than ten (11) persons at one time, with at all times proper “social distancing” maintained under then-existing CDC or KDHE guidelines.

A prohibited “public gathering” does not include restaurants, bars and food pantries if they lawfully serve food and/or beverages by means of drive-thru or carry-out service, curbside service, or delivery only, with no dine-in seating allowed. Any persons inside such restaurant, bar or food pantry shall maintain at all times, proper “social distancing” under then-existing CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) or KDHE (Kansas Department of Health & Education) guidelines.

A prohibited “public gathering” does not include religious gatherings, funerals, memorial services, and weddings provided proper “social distancing” is maintained at all times under then-existing CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) or KDHE (Kansas Department of Health & Education) guidelines.

A prohibited “public gathering” does not include a licensed and lawfully operated (under Kansas statutes and all Riley County Health Department and KDHE standards) child care facility provided:

1. Every child must be screened upon entry and again prior to leaving. The temperature check cannot be taken within four (4) hours after a fever reducing medication was given.
2. The child care facility must present, upon request of the Local Health Officer, the completed screening form for each child in their facility. Failure to comply will result in the revocation of the child care facility’s license.
3. This licensed child care facility exemption will not go into effect until Monday, March 23rd, 2020 at 12:01 a.m.

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Public Health
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PLEASE BE AWARE ANY VIOLATION OF THE ABOVE ORDER, AND ANY VIOLATION OF THE EXEMPTIONS DESCRIBED ABOVE MAY SUBJECT THE VIOLATOR TO AN INDIVIDUAL ORDER BANNING FUTURE GATHERINGS AT THAT SPECIFIC LOCATION AND MAY INCLUDE CRIMINAL PENALTIES.

Gibbs stated: "We understand that this could be a difficult time for the local businesses, but the urgency of this situation and protection of the community as a whole is our top priority.

The health officer strongly encourages everyone to follow the guidance provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), federal, state and local public health officials and private medical providers. These approaches are used to minimize morbidity and mortality and the social and economic impacts of COVID-19.

The Riley County Health Department will continue to work with the local medical community; with the Director of Emergency Medical Services, David Adams; with Riley County Emergency Management; and the elected leaders of Riley County to make decisions in the best interest of all people in Riley County.

Protecting the health of our local community will always be our top priority and the next few weeks and months will be crucial to limit the spread of this virus.

"We ask that we all help each other. Please check on your neighbors, especially the elderly and the most vulnerable. Please only purchase the supplies that you need, so that others can be equally prepared," said Gibbs.

For more information about Riley County's response to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) threat, visit <https://www.rileycountyks.gov/coronavirus>.

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