



Missoula City-County Health Department

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

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MEDIA RELEASE

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Health Officials Close Bars and Limit Food Service to Prevent COVID-19 Spread

The Missoula City-County Health Officer issued an order closing bars and limiting restaurant service starting at 8 am Tuesday, March 17 through 8 am on Tuesday, March 24. The order comes on the heels of CDC guidance to restrict events to fewer than 50 people, and the growing evidence supporting social distancing, or the avoidance of large groups of people and close contact. Other jurisdictions in Montana are doing the same, including Butte, as well as elected officials across the country.

“I know that this is a big ask with Saint Patty’s day tomorrow, but this is not a typical time. This is a global pandemic of a new virus that spreads easily from person-to-person, and we need everyone’s help in curbing it,” said Ellen Leahy, Health Officer. With two presumptive positive COVID-19 tests over the weekend and other cases across the state, the order is timely, especially in light of the school closures by Governor Bullock.

While the order prohibits the operation of bars and dine-in food service, the order does allow for limited operation via drive-thru, take out, and delivery service. It also doesn’t include food services that are a sole source of food for a population such as nursing homes, UM dining, or hospitals. Food services that operate in a limited capacity need to follow the food service regulations and additional guidance from the health department.

“We appreciate the cooperation of the businesses affected. One of the great things about Missoula is the community-minded approach of the business community. Working together, we can minimize the impact on Missoula’s health and the economy.”

For more information, call Public Information Officer Alisha Johnson at 406-830-5363. If you are a health care provider and have questions about testing, please call the Infectious Disease office. For all other COVID-related questions, please call our hotline at 406-258-INFO or visit our website at <http://missoula.co/cviro>.