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MEDIA RELEASE

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Health Department Announces Move to Phase Two

The Missoula City-County Health Department announced Phase Two in Missoula today. The health department amended local orders to embrace the Governor's requirements, which take effect on June 1.

Starting next Monday, per Governor Bullock's directive, gyms, fitness studios, pools, restaurants, and bars can move to 75% capacity providing that they can maintain six-foot distancing. Restaurants and bars can increase the number of people seated at tables, and bowling alleys and concert halls can open with reduced capacity. The state directive also increased group size to 50 without social distancing and asked those hosting larger events to contact their local health department on distancing measures.

The order issued today outlines how event coordinators connect with the health department as requested in the Governor's directive. It also provides event coordinators social distancing guidelines.

"Missoula has many events during the summer. We want these to happen and need coordinators to think about how to support distancing and other COVID preventions," said Cindy Farr, Incident Commander for the health department's COVID-19 response. "This isn't over, unfortunately."

The Governor's Phase Two also eliminates the traveler's quarantine. With many areas of the country still seeing a lot of cases, including nearby states, this could mean additional cases for Montana.

"Right now, Montana looks like the place to be. We have great recreation opportunities and events, low case counts, and people are going to start coming here," said Farr. "The virus could get introduced, and if we don't use the means we have for preventing spread, this could take off." Farr pointed out that Missoula is considered a tourist destination.

Farr also encouraged Missoulians to continue practicing COVID-19 prevention measures and embrace the changes that they may see at events this summer to keep everyone safe. She pointed out that while events may not feel the same as in the past, Missoula is trying to provide ways for them to happen. Other areas have decided not to allow larger events until the Governor changes his directives.

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