



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 14, 2020

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### **Teller County Moved to COVID-19 Dial Level Orange-High Risk**

Despite the efforts of the Teller County Board of Health, Board of County Commissioners, and the citizens of Teller County to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in Teller County, yesterday the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) moved Teller County to Level Orange – High Risk on the COVID-19 Dial. This level adds additional restrictions and was undertaken by CDPHE prior to allowing the previous restrictions under Level Yellow to have an impact on the metrics used to determine levels on the COVID Dial.

As of today the incidence rates in Teller County are:

Two-week cumulative incidence rate: 493/100,000 people

Percent positivity: 11.6%

Two-week COVID-19 case count (new cases): 125

Effective **Monday, November 16, 2020 at 5:00PM**, additional state restrictions that will go into place include, but are not limited to:

- Personal gatherings are restricted to no more than 10 people from no more than two (2) households.
- Restaurants may operate at 25% (down from 50%) of posted occupancy indoors, not to exceed 50 people, excluding staff.
- Houses of worship and indoor events may operate at 25% (down from 50%) of posted occupancy indoors, not to exceed 50 people, per room.
- Outdoor events may operate at 25% (down from 50%) of posted occupancy not to exceed 75 (down from 175) people, whichever is less.
- Other commercial businesses, including gyms and fitness centers, may operate at 25% of posted occupancy indoors, unless they are otherwise designated as essential.
- Casinos are CLOSED (unless a possible exception is granted based on county request).

CDPHE will continue to monitor incidence rates for 1-2 weeks and will meet with County Health Officials to reevaluate at that time. Failure to improve incidence rates over this time period may lead to further CDPHE restrictions.

Teller County continues to encourage all residents and businesses to help fight the spread of COVID-19 in our community by staying home when possible, wearing a mask when within six feet of others and in public, following social distancing guidelines, and washing your hands regularly. It will take everyone, working together, to keep Teller County open for business.

Additional information on specific sector guidance under COVID-19 Dial Level Orange can be found in Public Health Order (PHO) 20-36 which is located at <https://covid19.colorado.gov/prepare-protect-yourself/prevent-the-spread/public-health-executive-orders>.



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November 14, 2020

**Re: Commissioners statement on increased COVID-19 state restrictions in Teller County, CO**

On Friday November 13, 2020 the Teller County Commissioners, Teller County Public Health, and the Colorado Department of Health and Environment (CDPHE) met by phone to discuss Teller County's status on the state's COVID-19 Dial system. We were notified that Teller County will be moving from Yellow (Concern) to Orange (High Risk) on Monday, November 16, 2020. We argued our case and believe that this move is seriously damaging to Teller County.

Teller County went to Yellow on Monday, November 9, 2020. We made it clear to CDPHE that we need a reasonable amount of time at Yellow to have an opportunity to recover and stabilize our cases. A mere week is not enough time.

Moving to Orange will affect all of Teller County but especially the casino industry in Cripple Creek. Casinos have been singled out in the Public Health Order as the only industry required to close under the Orange designation with the exception of alcohol only bars. We argued that casinos should remain open similar to restaurants, gyms, retail establishments, and schools. To date, only 5% of Teller County's total cases have been traced to the Cripple Creek area.

The casinos in Cripple Creek have done an exemplary job of compliance to COVID-19 state regulations. Their protocols, sanitation, temperature checks, and response to a small outbreak have all been handled effectively and expeditiously.

Public safety is critical as is economic vitality and sustainability. This delicate balance must not favor one side over the other. We believe we must keep local businesses open and their people employed in a fair and rational manner, meanwhile taking every necessary health precaution to reduce disease transmission. More than 1,000 jobs are at stake and critical gaming tax revenue would be lost if casinos are shuttered.

CDPHE has indicated that they are considering our case to allow casinos to remain open and will report back to us on Monday, November 16, 2020. We are hopeful that the valid positions taken by the County, the Cities, casino industry, and elected officials across the county will yield a positive outcome on this critical matter.

We commend all businesses and organizations in Teller County who have worked hard to keep employees and patrons safe during the COVID 19 response. Please continue to apply COVID-19 health practices while conducting business and interacting in public spaces.

Sincerely,

Commissioners Marc Dettenrieder, Bob Campbell, and Norm Steen