

**COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH  
PRESS RELEASES RELATED TO PUBLIC HEALTH ORDERS AND TRACKING OF COVID19**

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**Declining transmission control in the Colorado SARS-CoV-2 model and rapidly increasing hospitalizations signal Colorado is at a critical moment in the COVID-19 pandemic**

REMOTE, (Oct. 23, 2020): The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment and the Colorado School of Public Health released a [new modeling report](#) based on recent data showing hospitalizations from SARS-CoV-2 are increasing rapidly across the state. To avoid increasing infections and strain on hospitals over the next three months, a substantial increase in transmission control will be needed. The Colorado modeling report uses a new “transmission control” indicator to describe the collective impact of all policies and behaviors designed to mitigate the spread of SARS-CoV-2. Transmission control captures ALL behavioral and policy changes in response to the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic including mask wearing, physical distancing, improved ventilation, working from home, contact tracing (including both isolation and quarantine), moving activities outside, and any seasonal impact. This approach has the advantage of requiring fewer assumptions and increasing accuracy for the Colorado model. In technical terms, the transmission control parameter describes the percent decrease in effective contacts between infected and susceptible individuals compared to pre-pandemic behavior.

Transmission control levels under about 79% will lead to increasing infections and an effective reproductive number greater than 1; and if contact rates are reduced and transmission control is above 79%, infections will decrease.

The latest modeling provides projections based on COVID-19 hospital census data through October 19, 2020. The models are based on Colorado data and assumptions based on the current state of the science.

Key findings from the report:

- We are at a critical moment. If Colorado remains on the current trajectory, we will likely exceed the April peak in hospitalizations for COVID-19 by mid-November, which exceeded 900 in one day. Increases in contacts over the holidays will accelerate growth in cases and intensive care unit hospital capacity may be exceeded in December or January.
- The effective reproductive number is approximately 1.5 (ranging with statistical uncertainty from 1.16 to 1.85).
- Approximately 1 in 292 Coloradans are currently infectious. This estimate is generated from the model and assumes that not all infectious residents are captured by state surveillance systems.
- Hospitalizations are rapidly increasing. Avoiding challenging peaks in infections and hospital demand over the next three months will require a substantial increase in transmission control.
- The window to improve transmission control is over the next several weeks to assure that critical care capacity is not stressed. The magnitude and timing of reductions in transmission will determine the severity of COVID-19 in Colorado in the months ahead.

The Colorado School of Public Health (ColoradoSPH) assembled the expert group that works with the state on modeling projections. The group includes modeling scientists at the ColoradoSPH and the University of Colorado School of Medicine at the CU Anschutz Medical Campus, as well as experts from the University of Colorado Boulder, University of Colorado Denver, and Colorado State University. [All previous modeling reports are available](#) on the Colorado School of Public Health’s COVID-19 website. The state will continue to review data and model findings as the pandemic continues to inform policy decisions. Continue to stay up to date by visiting [covid19.colorado.gov](https://covid19.colorado.gov).

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## **Personal gatherings limited to ten people, no more than two households**

REMOTE, (Oct. 23, 2020): In response to an alarming increase in hospitalizations due to COVID-19, the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) today amended its [Safer at Home public health order](#) to limit personal gatherings in all counties at all Safer at Home levels. The revised order reduces the size of personal gatherings to no more than 10 people from no more than two separate households.

Recent case investigation data show that since July attending social gatherings and community exposures have become more common among new cases. This suggests people have relaxed their precautions and are interacting more closely with a greater number of households.

“We are asking all Coloradans to act with an abundance of caution to reverse these worrying trends. Right now, the virus is spreading when people from multiple households attend gatherings. We need to keep gatherings smaller and with people from fewer households — we are asking everyone to ‘shrink their bubble’ to reduce the spread,” said Jill Hunsaker Ryan, executive director, CDPHE. “Please take every effort to reduce contact with members of other households. If you can work remotely, please do so to reduce contact with other individuals. Taking action now can prevent your loved ones from getting sick, and help us save lives and avoid stricter public health orders in the future.”

Certain counties, like Denver, Arapahoe, Adams, and Boulder, have recently instituted stricter public health orders on gathering sizes. As always, Coloradans living in counties with stricter orders should continue to follow those orders.

The amended public health order does not apply to counties that are currently at the Protect Our Neighbors level. Local governments in these counties may continue to determine gathering limits as they see fit, but all Coloradans are strongly encouraged to limit gatherings.

In addition to limiting gatherings and gathering sizes, Coloradans should continue to follow other public health guidance, including wearing a mask in public, washing hands frequently, and keeping physical distance of at least 6 feet from others outside their household.

Access all [public health and executive orders](#) online.

Continue to stay up to date by visiting [covid19.colorado.gov](https://covid19.colorado.gov).