

To: Jill Hunsaker Ryan, MPH, Executive Director,  
CDPHE Mara Brosy-Wiwchar, Chief of Staff, CDPHE  
Michelle Child, County Variance Manager  
From: Douglas County, Colorado  
Re: Douglas County COVID-19 Mitigation Plan  
Date: July 21, 2020

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## **DOUGLAS COUNTY VARIANCE & MITIGATION FRAMEWORK**

Douglas County respectfully requests clarification about the change in direction by the Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) related to variance approvals and thresholds that necessitated the July 17, 2020 letter. According to Douglas County's most recent granted variance dated June 26, 2020, the standard for review of all Douglas County variances was to be that the County would not exceed a percent positivity of 5%. In the event the County exceeded that threshold, the County was to notify CDPHE and then implement a mitigation plan for 2 weeks to try and restore virus transmission levels to the baseline under which the variance was approved. Douglas County has not exceeded the percent positivity rate of 5% and currently resides at 4.6%. Similarly, Douglas County remains in compliance with the State's guidance document regarding variance and thresholds (copied below) to remain in the "low" viral spread category.

Pursuant to CDPHE's July 17, 2020 request, Douglas County has implemented the following variance mitigation measures consistent with our approved variances<sup>1</sup> from the Department of Public Health and Environment:

- a) Testing Capacity
- b) Contract Tracing of Positive COVID-19 Cases
- c) Public Education and Citizen Engagement

### **Testing Capacity**

Tri-County Health Department is using a study by Harvard<sup>2</sup> which established recommendations for each state and the appropriate level of testing. The current recommendation from Tri-County Health Department is 515 tests per day for Douglas County. In order to ensure the County has the capacity to test the Tri-County Health Department's identified goal of 515 tests per day the County has entered into an agreement with STRIDE Community Health Center (STRIDE) to provide testing within the County. STRIDE Community Health Center is also assisting in the development of a strategic testing

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<sup>1</sup> Douglas County's variances were approved under the following condition: "If the County were to exceed a percent positivity of 5%, notify CDPHE and then implement a mitigation plan for 2 weeks to try and restore virus transmission levels to the baseline under which the variance was approved. If after 2 weeks the levels are not restored, then the capacity limits are automatically adjusted to the maximum of the new level (low goes to medium, medium goes to high). This standard for variance review applies to all variances currently in effect in Douglas County."

<sup>2</sup> "Analysis: More than half of U.S. states aren't doing enough COVID-19 testing"  
<https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/news/hsph-in-the-news/analysis-more-than-half-of-u-s-states-arent-doing-enough-covid-19-testing/>

plan intended to identify and target key populations and effectively deliver convenient testing opportunities to them to contain viral transmission.

Douglas County is partnering with its municipalities to provide free drive-through community diagnostic COVID-19 testing<sup>3</sup> through the use of CDPHE supplies and lab processing. Events will be held on the following days and open to those who live or work in Douglas County and meet eligibility criteria:

- July 22 in Castle Pines,
- August 4 in Castle Rock,
- August 13 in Lone Tree and
- August 25 in Parker; all from 9 a.m. – 1 p.m. or until supplies (200 tests) are depleted.

STRIDE will provide diagnostic and antibody COVID-19 testing as directed in Douglas County for four months from Sept. 1, 2020 – Dec. 30, 2020. A strategic plan will be developed collaboratively between STRIDE and the County to identify locations conducive to accommodating community testing that will reach a wide variety of populations. A mobile testing unit may be deployed and/or an existing site may be used to administer testing services.

STRIDE will work closely with the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment and the Tri-County Health Department to operate using best practices and cooperate with contact tracing, investigations, etc. as appropriate when requested. STRIDE will leverage existing technology and applications to facilitate efficient pre-registration for testing and the delivery of test results

Douglas County is also partnering to support employees of the Douglas County School District, participants in the Winter Shelter Network, those experiencing homelessness, rural and mountain residents, etc. with testing opportunities.

Expected Outcome – access to testing will enable rapid identification of potential positive cases, allow for tracing to minimize additional spread of the virus and identification of additional individuals who should take necessary steps to eliminate additional spread.

### **Contract Tracing of Positive COVID-19 Cases**

Tri-County Health Department (TCHD) is working on a major priority of deploying an expanded workforce for disease investigation and contact tracing. This includes executing rapid response programs that enable quick isolation and contact tracing of individuals who test positive, whether they are symptomatic or asymptomatic. Anyone who has come into contact with an individual who has tested positive will be screened for symptoms, and those who are symptomatic will be directed to testing sites. TCHD is working to identify and provide public health interventions with high priority locations, such as long term care facilities (LTCF), through our LTCF Outbreak Task Force, as well as rapid response to other community outbreaks through our Community Outbreak Task Force.

TCHD has contracted with a Senior Recruiter, to solely focus on response recruiting, screening and

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.douglas.co.us/covid19-testing/events/>

the placement of contract staff/volunteers. TCHD deployed a statewide technology solution to support contact tracing data collection and analysis, and the estimated date for the selection and deployment of this statewide solution was June 2020. TCHD is hiring upwards of 400 contact tracers to meet the needs of their jurisdictional counties. The estimated workforce needs based on moving from abridged case investigations and contact tracing efforts to full case investigation and contact tracing efforts is illustrated on the following page. The County has on the Commissioners Business Meeting agenda for July 28, 2020 the IGA with Tri-County Health Department to pay for contact tracing costs using the County’s portion of CARES Act Funding received from the Department of Local Affairs

Expected Outcome – rapid contact tracing will enable identification of cases, containment of spread, and identification of additional individuals who should take necessary steps to eliminate additional spread.

TCHD COVID-19 Investigation Task Force Staffing Estimates	Average Total Number of Cases per Day as of 5/8/20	Current Workforce (5/8/20) based on Average Caseload of 175 with Partial Investigation and Tracing)	Estimated Workforce based on Average Caseload (175 Cases/Day with full investigation and tracing)	Estimated Workforce based on Average Caseload (350 Cases/Day with full investigation and tracing)	Estimated Workforce based on Average Caseload (525 Cases/Day with full investigation and tracing)
Number of Teams Needed		N/A	11	22	33
Investigation Supervisor		2	2	4	6
Investigation Coordinator		2	2	4	6
Investigation Team Lead		4	11	22	33
Case Investigator		20	22	44	66
Investigation Contact Tracer		N/A	45	90	135
Investigation Contact Monitor		N/A	22	44	66
CEDRS Coordinator		1	2	4	6
Data Analyst		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Outbreak Task Force		10	13	26	39
LTCF Outbreak Task Force		11	15	30	45
Total Number of Staff		50	134	268	402
Estimated Date of Completion		5/11/2020	07/1/2020		

### Public Education and Citizen Engagement

The County will continue its simultaneous, ongoing integration of data-informed, multiple online and traditional disciplines and distribution-means, including consistent messaging to target audience(s), in the space(s) they trust, often where they already are. Distribution means include: paid media, social media, live town halls, media relations, and a variety of other digital means. Focusing on brevity, companion visuals, repurposing messaging using the tradition and digital communications channels the County is collaborating with TCHD on campaigns designed to inform our communities about public health behaviors including personal responsibility associated with mask-wearing, hand-washing, social distancing, getting tested, staying home and isolating when sick, and cooperating with public health investigations.

## Expected Outcomes

- Personal responsibility and positive choices by our communities leading to a decrease in new cases.
- Communities will see the relationship between their responsible choices and benefits for our community and economy. That connection will positively reinforce their responsible behavior.

## **COMMUNITY GOALS**

Douglas County's community goals for the mitigation of COVID-19 are to minimize the internal and external stressors on citizens, limit the chances for a medical surge in excess of hospital capacity, and an economic collapse. Using the positive test target for low variance transmission of 5.0 percent positive tests, Douglas County has not exceeded the 5.0 percent threshold as of July 21, 2020<sup>4</sup>. In addition, using the population of 370,000<sup>5</sup> the COVID-19 positive case rate per 100,000 for incident in Douglas County would be reduced from what is currently reported on the Department of Public Health and Environment website. In order to maintain low transmission rates seen in Douglas County, the County has implemented the following community and response efforts:

1. Support for adequate case investigations of positive COVID-19 cases within the County
2. Continue encouraging citizens' compliance with state public health orders especially social distancing requirements
3. Maintain strong message of personal responsibility, especially for those who are positive or presumed positive, along with direct household members, remain isolated for 14 days and high-risk and older individuals are strongly encouraged to remain at home when they can
4. Constant collaboration with hospitals to ensure there is not a medical surge in excess of capacity
5. Continued support for businesses who have established social distancing protocols with visibly posted signage
6. Support Tri-County Health Department in its testing strategy
7. Development of County-wide website for COVID-19 information related to Counties, municipalities, and partners
8. Establishment of 4 task forces to address different aspects of the COVID-19 pandemic:
  - a. Multijurisdictional Communications Task Force
  - b. Economic Recovery Task Force -
  - c. Human Needs Task Force
  - d. FEMA/Local Government Task Force
9. Coordination, acquisition, and distribution of personal protective equipment (PPE) to hospitals, long-term care facilities, and other essential businesses

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<sup>4</sup> <https://data.tchd.org/covid19/testing/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.douglas.co.us/documents/douglas-county-demographics-summary.pdf/>

## DISEASE TRENDS

Pursuant to the Douglas County Suppression Plan which has been approved by the Department of Public Health and Environment, the County tracks the following two metrics as viable and sustainable data points to ensure the County remains within the low transmission threshold as defined by the Department<sup>6</sup>:

- a) 14 day average positive testing percentage
- b) Hospitalization data

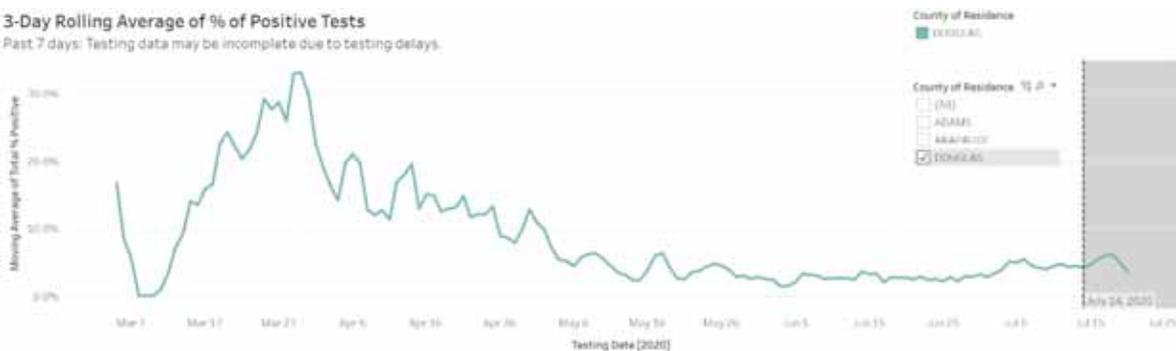
TCHD is working to utilize the full range of COVID-19 data to inform decision making of the work outlined in our efforts related to community testing as well as case investigation and contact tracing. We continually work to identify and categorize new and existing data sources for surveillance and compile reports and visualizations of critical metrics. Below is a summary of the transmission metrics:

### COVID-19 Tests Administered in the Past Two Weeks (14 Days)

	County of Residence		
	ADAMS	ARAPAHOE	DOUGLAS
Total Tests	<b>7,181</b>	<b>9,337</b>	<b>4,482</b>
Positive Tests	<b>419</b>	<b>485</b>	<b>204</b>
Total % Positive	<b>5.8%</b>	<b>5.2%</b>	<b>4.6%</b>

### 3-Day Rolling Average of % of Positive Tests

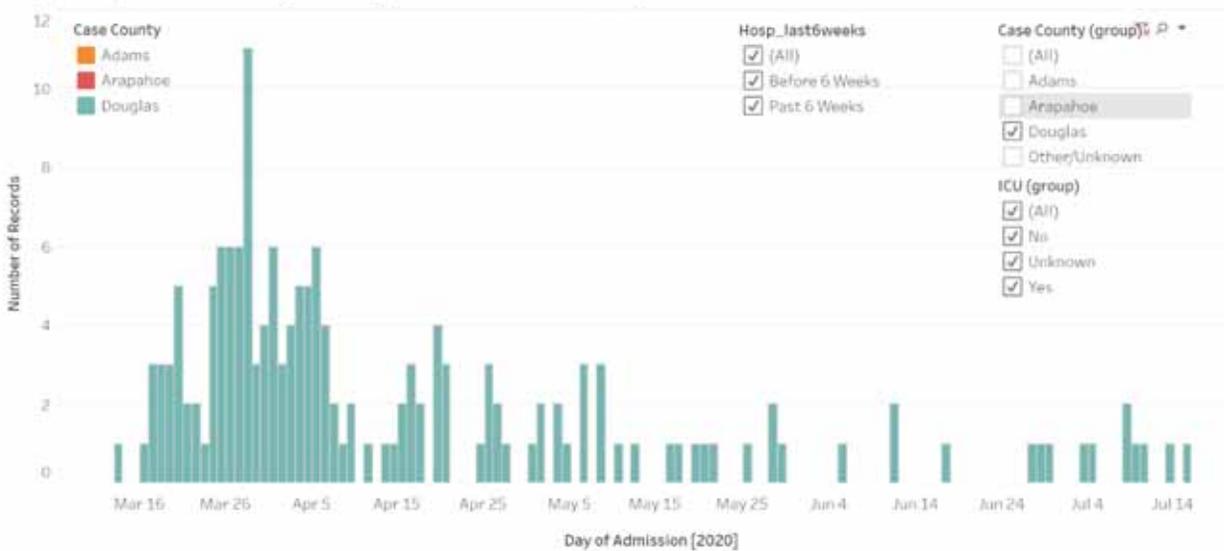
Past 7 days: Testing data may be incomplete due to testing delays.



<sup>6</sup> For counties with high testing rates, a two-week average positivity rate of less than 5% may be considered in lieu of two-week incidence data. AND Stable or declining average hospitalization in the county's referral hospitals for the last 14 days.

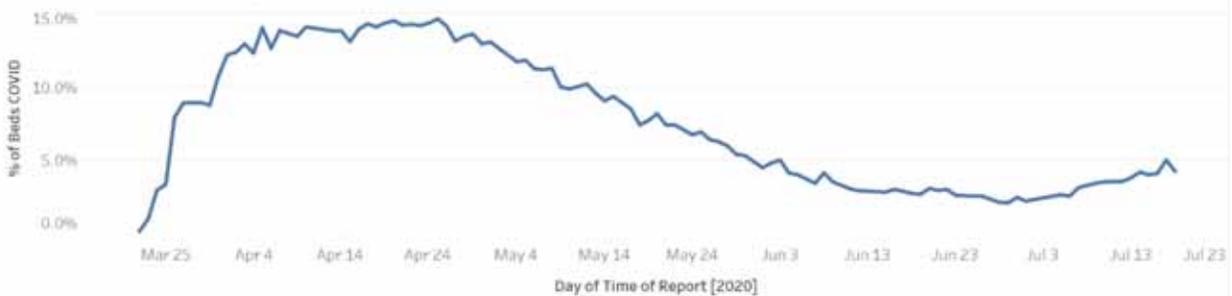
## Hospital Data

Daily Hospitalizations by County (Date of Admittance)



Percentage of Beds Occupied by COVID-19 Patients

Adams, Arapahoe, and Douglas Counties



Current Available Medical and ICU Beds by County\*

\*Reported by hospitals as part of normal bed capacity (does not include surge capacity)

County	ICU % Free	ICU % Full	Inpatient Beds % Free	Inpatient Beds % Full
Adams	18.4%	81.6%	10.0%	90.0%
Arapahoe	10.6%	89.4%	13.5%	86.5%
Douglas	27.4%	72.6%	23.9%	76.1%

Hospitalizations: Current Number of Positive and PUI\* COVID-19 Cases by County

\*PUI: Patient Under Investigation for COVID-19

County	# Confirmed COVID-19	#COVID19 PUIs	Total COVID-Related
Adams	44	27	71
Arapahoe	31	4	35
Douglas	12	6	18

## **TIMELINE**

Each of these mitigation strategies begin this week, July 20, 2020, with increased messaging and education campaign underway. The business outreach is already happening via the long-established public-private-partnership recovery taskforce focused on bringing Douglas County back to work safely. We expect to see decreases in percent positives in the coming days and will continue these increased strategies for two calendar weeks, with the campaigns slowing the week of August 3, 2020.