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Press Release
Board of Health to Meet This Week

The Gallatin City-County Board of Health will meet Friday, Nov. 6 at 7 AM to consider revisions to a local health rule that would include new restrictions on certain businesses intended to slow transmission of COVID-19.

The Board will consider measures to address the rapidly rising level of COVID-19 disease in Gallatin County and throughout Montana. Gallatin County has seen rapid, widespread, and sustained increases in new cases of COVID-19, hospitalizations, and outbreaks in several long-term care facilities for seniors. The rising level of disease is pushing hospitals in some Montana communities and neighboring states to near capacity, causing dozens of COVID-19 outbreaks in nursing homes and assisted living facilities throughout Montana, and driving up the number of deaths of those who contract the disease. More than 230,000 Americans stricken with COVID-19 have died since March.

The board will consider a number of revisions to an emergency rule that governs how certain businesses – including bars, restaurants, gyms and fitness centers, and places of assembly – operate during the COVID-19 pandemic. Changes to be considered by the Board of Health are intended to limit close contact between people and include:

- Moving the mandatory closing time for bars, tasting rooms, distilleries, casinos, and restaurants from 12:30 AM to 10 PM, and limiting group size at tables to 6 people;
- Requiring that higher-risk businesses – such as gyms/fitness centers, places of assembly, bars, restaurants, distilleries, casinos – limit the number of patrons to 50% of capacity. The Board's current local emergency rules allow these businesses to operate at 75% of capacity;
- Limiting most physical group gatherings in Gallatin County to no more than 25 individuals, regardless of the ability to physically distance. This restriction applies to both indoor and outdoor events. Currently, the Board of Health allows groups of up to 50 people without social distancing, and larger groups if social distancing can be accommodated.

The proposed rule revisions include exceptions for certain businesses and organizations where social distancing is most feasible, including houses of worship and certain places of assembly. The Board of Health is seeking public comment as it works to limit disease transmission while allowing businesses to operate in a way that mitigates risk.



Friday's meeting will be virtual in order to follow social distancing protocols and to keep participants safe. Those who wish to comment on the proposed rule can send public comments electronically prior to the meeting or access the meeting via computer or telephone to help keep everyone safe and socially distanced.

The proposed Board rule and other meeting materials can be found on the health department's web site <https://www.healthygallatin.org/about-us/minute-meetings-agendas/>.

Public comments can be sent to https://BoardofHealthPublicComment.formstack.com/forms/board_of_health_november6. The Board will accept written comments until 4 PM on Thursday, Nov. 5.

To participate virtually in Friday's meeting, please register in advance at <https://bit.ly/3oOOurY>. After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

The meeting will also be audio live streamed via AVCapture <https://www.healthygallatin.org/about-us/minute-meetings-agendas/>.

The Gallatin City-County Health Department Call Center is open seven days a week from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. for questions about COVID-19. Reach the Call Center by phone at 406-548-0123 or email at callcenter@readygallatin.com.

The most accurate local source of information remains the GCCHD [website](#).

