

## YUMA COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

February 11, 2021

### Special Meeting Minutes<sup>1</sup>

On February 11, 2021 at 3:30 p.m., the Yuma County Board of Commissioners met for a special meeting as members of the local Yuma County COVID Task Force. Commissioner Robin Wiley and Administrator Andrea Calhoon were present throughout the meeting with meeting members joining via teleconference. Also in attendance was Northeast Colorado Health Department Director Trish McClain as well as various municipal and hospital officials. The administrators of the four Yuma County school districts were invited as guests.

*COVID Task Force* – Northeast Colorado Health Department Director Trish McClain reviewed current local data including local case counts, positivity rates, and hospitalizations. McClain provided information on recent issues with State data updates that are in the process of being resolved. Yuma County is currently meeting the metrics for moving to Level Blue except for recent hospitalizations, which has been an indicated area of flexibility in Level assignment. Patients currently hospitalized were reported by the Wray Hospital as being swing bed/rehab patients who are not hospitalized for COVID infections. McClain recommended advocating for the County's move to blue based on the local metrics.

Jennifer Kramer of Wray Community District Hospital reported that only 4 current cases are being tracked by their facility at this time, three of which are currently within the facility in swing bed/rehab care. Kramer also provided updates on vaccine distribution and reported that they are seeing the waiting list for vaccine administration dwindle, prompting them to consider reducing the number of days per week vaccine clinics are held.

Beth Saxton of Yuma District Hospital provided updates on COVID topics and trends seen within Yuma healthcare facilities including testing, positivity, hospitalization, and vaccination statistics and protocols. Saxton reported only one positive test of 29 attributed to Yuma County this past week and only one hospital admission this month which has since been discharged. Saxton also provided reports on their educator vaccination efforts and planning and reported they hope to vaccinate approximately 75 educators during this clinic. At the request of the group, Saxton reported on trends seen in vaccine distribution and communication from and with the public regarding administration of the vaccine.

McClain recognized the efforts of both Yuma County hospitals in vaccinating educators within our communities and the continuous efforts by the hospitals to manage their vaccine programs effectively and efficiently. The hospitals discussed some of the challenges in engaging the community in receiving the vaccine and their efforts in messaging to encourage vaccination. McClain provided information on state and national level messaging she is aware of regarding vaccine administration and usage. The group discussed some of the community messaging that is being heard regarding vaccines, both encouraging individuals to be vaccinated and dissuading individuals from being vaccinated.

The group discussed options to move forward based on current local metrics and the new COVID Dial 2.0 metrics and protocols. Wray City Manager James DePue suggested that the Task Force draft a letter requesting a move to Level Blue given that local case counts and positivity rates are well within the metrics required and that hospitalization metrics are not necessarily reflective on a statistical level nor in context. The hospitals expressed support for this effort, especially in light of vaccination rates and efforts they have managed and the fact that the hospitalizations have not been straining resources of the facilities. Yuma City Manager Scott Moore expressed concern with local compliance with various COVID restrictions and how quickly county metrics may increase. The hospitals expressed the community morale impacts of varying restrictions in surrounding states and with changing metrics and expressed a need to manage community frustration in a way that protects our local community health and doesn't inadvertently encourage unnecessary travel. DePue reiterated his support for local decision-making and making good use of the opportunity to make informed local decisions based on the Task Force's knowledge of our own community. McClain provided perspective of the potential implications of local decision-making and statistical trends across the state in communities that are at varying levels of restrictions. McClain received unanimous support to contact the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment to advocate for Yuma County's move to level blue.

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<sup>1</sup> Minutes prepared by Andrea Calhoon are a summary of discussions, not a verbatim account.



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McClain provided information she has received regarding some community concerns over individuals traveling to our communities to receive vaccines and how NCHD is structuring vaccine clinics to prioritize those 70 and older, residents of the six-county northeast Colorado region, and then vaccinating those from other regions based on vaccine availability. McClain expressed that the majority of the vaccine is being administered to residents of our region, but that they are responding to demand from other areas of the state when they are able to without negatively impacting the ability to vaccinate within our region. The Yuma Hospital reported similar trends in their educator vaccine clinics and that they are similarly prioritizing local teachers first and serving those from other regions if they are able.

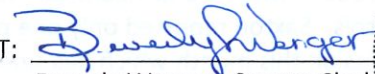
The group discussed consolidating the weekly school district superintendents' meeting with the Yuma County COVID Task Force meeting at an established day and time to make better and more efficient use of time for the group at large. The group determined that the two groups would convene Thursdays at 2:30 moving forward.

Moore provided feedback on the community comments received following the Value-Up mental and emotional resiliency program recently presented there and coming up for the Wray and Idalia school districts.

The meeting adjourned at 4:15 p.m. The next COVID Task Force meeting will be February 18, 2021 at 2:30 p.m.

  
Trent Bushner, Chairman

  
Andrea Calhoon, Administrator

ATTEST:   
Beverly Wenger, County Clerk

