

YUMA COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

November 5, 2020

Special Meeting Minutes¹

On November 5, 2020 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. Chairman Dean Wingfield, Commissioner Robin Wiley, Commissioner Trent Bushner, and Administrator Andrea Calhoon were present throughout the meeting with meeting members joining via teleconference. Also in attendance were various municipal and hospital officials as well as Northeast Colorado Health Department Director Trish McClain. The administrators of the four Yuma County school districts joined the meeting as guests.

COVID Task Force – McClain provided updates on current data status both locally and state-wide. McClain reported on the dramatic decrease in cases and the local response through change in testing strategy and how those changes have impacted both case counts and positivity rates. McClain also discussed hospitalizations state-wide and the concerns over hospital capacity in other regions of the state. Current hospitalizations across Colorado are at peak levels and the growth trend seen in current state-wide data. The group discussed the impacts both of an increase in Colorado patients and the strain placed on Colorado resources by patients taken from neighboring states. McClain discussed surge capacity infrastructure on the front range and the state’s positioning to respond to needs in excess of hospital capacity.

The group discussed challenges with compliance and worries over upcoming holidays as well as seasonal illness schedules and discussed options for response and marketing, both locally and statewide. Commissioner Bushner relayed observations in public response in other areas of the state and the lack of apparent correlation between local compliance with public health and local case counts in different areas of the state. McClain discussed potential changes in testing capabilities in different environments including in educational and congregate care environments. McClain also discussed patterns in human and social behavior that appear to be impacting viral transmission.

Extensive discussion was held regarding messaging campaigns and how to realistically and effectively reach the public with messaging that is effective with our specific regional community. The group discussed messaging that has and hasn’t worked within our community and how to tailor marketing in a way that our community is receptive to it, but that includes content that is realistic and applicable within our community. Also discussed were sources of messaging and options for how to push messaging out from cohesive sources.

Local healthcare staff provided updates on local case activity and trends seen locally including trends in local hospitalizations. Northeast Colorado Health Department staff provided updates on planned changes to the COVID dashboard on their website and representatives from the Cities and the County discussed the use and plan for remaining Coronavirus Relief Fund/CARES Act funding available to Yuma County.

The meeting adjourned at 4:50 p.m. The next COVID Task Force meeting will be set for the week of November 9, 2020 based on group availability.



Dean Wingfield, Chairman



Andrea Calhoon, Administrator

ATTEST: 

Beverly Wenger, County Clerk



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