

Humboldt County Jurisdictional Assessment and Action Plan

County Jurisdictional Assessment

Overall Assessment: Please provide a brief overall assessment of the nature of COVID-19 in your community, including identifying what you believe the sources of spread of the virus are, what is currently being done well, and the opportunities for decreasing the spread.

Humboldt County became a focal point of the pandemic early in the process, due entirely to an exposure that resulted from a family gathering in late March/early April. Subsequently, that family and another that were related, spread the virus amongst the family members and their close friends due to continued contact between the individuals in these groups. This was because the family members and friends attempted to assist each other as well as additional family gatherings for social events (birthdays, holidays, etc.). Through many efforts on behalf of Dr Stringham as the County Health Officer, the county and city through their public information officers and law enforcement agencies, the message was received and the exposures waned.

Currently, we have seen a reduced number of cases, however, we are still experiencing exposures, primarily amongst younger groups of citizens, due to not following the distancing, mask wearing, and sanitary protocols outlined by the CDC, State, and other agencies.

In addition, the Fort McDermitt Indian Reservation has experienced an outbreak that is producing extremely high numbers of positive cases (72 as of this writing). These numbers have recently been added to the county numbers for positive cases, which, of course, has put the county back in the "High Risk" category with the state. The county is opposed to this practice as it has no authority to dictate what the tribe does with respect to mandating quarantine protocols for newly identified cases. Despite the fact the county has reached out to the tribe to offer assistance in an effort to support our neighbors, the offers were rejected outright, citing the tribe's sovereign nation status. Thus, it seems ludicrous to penalize the county for an area of the county boundary where it has no jurisdiction to mandate efforts to stop the virus.

The County Health Board met weekly for nearly three months, providing citizens with updates and requesting feedback from citizens and organizations alike to identify strategies and tactics to battle the virus. As a result, the implementation of the FAST team, our local contact tracing team, has done outstanding work in stemming the tide of exposure through alerting new patients and the individuals that they came on contact with about the potential for exposure. As part of that effort, we still have no evidence that any cases resulted from contact in a public place (either outdoor or indoor). If that changes, we would change our focus to that specific facility or event to address the problem. Currently, we continue to provide constant information through our county/city websites,

our county Facebook, and other social media venues to encourage the wearing of face masks whenever an individual leaves their domicile and especially in public places; socially distance, especially in the case where a mask is not being worn by the individual or others; and through sanitary procedures from hand washing to constant cleaning of work areas and personal belongings.

Critical Statewide Metrics

Counties will provide a jurisdictional assessment based on the Critical Statewide Metrics provided in *Road to Recovery: Moving to a New Normal*. These assessments are intended to be concise and operational in nature and should provide data, analysis, and recommendations from the county's perspective. These Critical Statewide Metrics are:

1. Hospital Capacity
2. Access to Personal Protective Equipment
3. Testing Capacity
4. Case Investigation and Contact Tracing
5. Protection of Vulnerable Populations
6. Enforcement

Hospital Capacity

Describe the state of hospital capacity within the county, including:

- Describe the status of staffed ICU beds, ventilators, staffing, medication treatments, and PPE: *Staffed currently for up to surge of 33 patients - 7 ventilators, ICU - staffed for 3 patients. Medications: We have a supply of medication to care for 7 ventilated patients for 6 days.*
- Describe the status of Alternate Care Facility planning, staffing, and implementation. *We can deploy a field hospital that can admit 49 patients. We do not have staffing for this. We would need state implementation. We need minimum of 24 - 48 hours for implementation.*
- Describe your current assessment of overall hospital capacity and metrics that will determine expansion to Alternate Care Facilities: *I give a daily census to the state; we are good at this time. The field policy outlines the trigger points at 80 % capacity on a daily basis and seeing a surge in patients, the ED medical director and Hospitalist medical director will consider opening field hospital.*

Access to Personal Protective Equipment

HGH: We have 15 – 30-day supply.

Describe the status of PPE within the county, including:

- Describe the status of PPE on-hand (in local reserve) and on order: *The current status of PPE in Humboldt County: Nevada is stable with a 30-day supply on-hand, with vendors being identified to continue maintaining continuity of*

operations. Humboldt General Hospital has been utilizing the Battel N-95 Sanitization process and reports no issues with maintaining PPE for staff. Humboldt County local government is stable with a 30-day supply on hand and we are currently not experiencing supply chain issues for obtaining PPE based on the needs of the county. Weekly updates are conducted.

- Describe the county's distribution priorities: PPE is distributed to frontline healthcare workers, EMS, First Responders, and essential government workers who have the most risk of exposure to coronavirus and / or who work with patients at the highest risk for severe health outcomes. Providing PPE to these individuals may also help to prevent shortages of healthcare staff due to illness and preserve the healthcare system.

If PPE is required by state regulations as part of routine duties performed by essential workers, the following guidelines in accordance with FEMA and state regulations are implemented:

- Extend use times of undamaged, non-visibly soiled PPE, and implement expanded facility-based PPE reuse policies and procedures.
- Adapt and implement Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) strategies for healthcare to optimize the supply of PPE and equipment, and best practices to sustain PPE supplies.
- Implement decontamination and reuse strategies of filtering face piece respirators as contingency and crisis capacity measures.
- Use alternative types or sources of PPE to support necessary operations. Use National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH)-approved respiratory protection that was not previously approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Monitor FDA and Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) websites for updates and announcements on relaxed enforcement and Emergency Use Authorizations.
- Consult guidance from CDC's NIOSH on strategies to conserve, extend and respond to shortages in the supply of filtering face piece respirators (FFRs) used in non-healthcare worksites.

If PPE is not required by state regulations as part of routine duties performed by essential workers, the following guidelines in accordance with FEMA and state regulations are implemented:

- Implement exposure-reduction measures, such as barrier controls (e.g., Plexiglass barriers, improved ventilation systems) and safe-work practices, such as adjusting business operations to increase physical space between employees. Consult CDC's Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers to Plan and Respond to COVID-19 for further considerations to reduce overall risk of exposure in the workplace.

- *Do not attempt to acquire medical or industrial use PPE for such employees. Such PPE is likely unavailable and is required for other higher priority critical infrastructure functions. Surgical masks or N95 respirators are critical supplies that must continue to be reserved for healthcare workers and other medical first responders, as recommended by current CDC guidance.*
- *Instead, follow CDC guidance on use of simple cloth face coverings. CDC recommends wearing cloth face coverings in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain (e.g., control rooms, production floors), especially in areas of significant community-based transmission.*

Describe your current assessment of overall PPE and metrics that will be used to determine additional emergency measures: The current assessment of overall PPE status in Humboldt County is described as stable, with no noted deficiencies. Individual agencies and organizations utilizing PPE measure the burn rate and identify specific types of PPE to be obtained as needed, based on the ongoing needs of the agencies. Each agency utilizes a burn rate calculator that meets the needs of those agencies. Humboldt County as a government entity has obtained PPE for first responders and essential employees, and Emergency Management has maintained PPE supply in reserve which would meet a 14-day demand if necessary.

Testing Capacity

Describe the status of your local testing efforts, including:

Humboldt General Hospital offers symptomatic and asymptomatic COVID-19 testing Monday through Friday in its screening clinic. Persons also are tested in the Emergency Department before being admitted into the hospital. On average, approximately 14 people are tested each day (98 per week) using both state lab and rapid tests. Additionally, the Office of the Humboldt County Health Nurse offers testing for asymptomatic and/or exposed persons only. Since May 18, that office has averaged 4 tests per week.

The Fort McDermitt Paiute and Shoshone Tribe has conducted 355 tests using their Wellness Center's Abbott machine since mid-July, for an average of approximately 13 tests per day (91 per week). This does not include 47 members of the reservation who were community tested by the National Guard on July 26.

- *Description of your testing criteria: Humboldt County uses a number of different criteria in deciding whom to test for Covid-19 infection. Our County's general philosophy is that anyone who would like to be tested can be. We do not ration tests, we encourage all to be tested, and test frequently. Our directed testing program has many sub-facets. First, there is a directed, symptom-based testing strategy in which those who exhibit symptoms are tested. To date, the majority of*

positive tests have been realized from this subset. We additionally test those who have come into contact with known infected patients. We also test routinely, those who do not have symptoms. This includes certain private and public sector employers within our community. Humboldt General Hospital, for example routinely tests patients who exhibit no symptoms, if they meet certain criteria. We test all patients who will be undergoing procedures at the hospital. Several of our area mining employers also test routinely. Humboldt County has participated in large scale community-based testing programs through our County Health Nurse and the Nevada National Guard. It is also possible for patients to test if they merely would like to know their status, despite having no symptoms or known exposures. Such testing is available at our County Health Nurse's office on an ongoing basis.

Overview of the number of people tested in a day/week: On average, approximately 14 people are tested each day (98 per week) using both state lab and rapid tests. Additionally, the Office of the Humboldt County Health Nurse offers testing for asymptomatic and/or exposed persons only. Since May 18, that office has averaged 4 tests per week.

The Fort McDermitt Paiute and Shoshone Tribe has conducted 355 tests using their Wellness Center's Abbott machine since mid-July, for an average of approximately 13 tests per day (91 per week). This does not include 47 members of the reservation who were community tested by the National Guard on July 26.

Overview of targeted testing efforts for high-risk communities, outbreak intervention, and other efforts: Humboldt County officials have identified several groups within our community that are at higher risk of acquiring Covid-19, and additional groups in which the virus would pose an accelerated risk of disease progression or death. We focus extra attention on disease prevention and behavior modification in these groups. The Hispanic community, for example, has both been hit hard with cases far in excess of what would have been anticipated by random chance. Also, the incidence of diabetes, hypertension, and obesity — each of which is well recognized as an accelerated risk of disease progression — are more prevalent in this population. For these reasons, our Covid response team provides all messages in Spanish. We also issue messages in the local Spanish speaking newspaper and have a group of Spanish speaking opinion leaders who help to disseminate a message of prevention, and cautious behavior. Other high-risk groups such as our elderly population have been the subjects of aggressive campaigns. Recently, the cluster of cases on the McDermitt Indian Reservation has been the subject of intense efforts to communicate with officials of this sovereign nation. Many of the Humboldt County Covid response team have reached out to our neighbors in McDermitt in hopes of effecting a change in that community's Covid response. While that community's replies to our pleas to assist have been mixed, Humboldt County officials continue attempts to assist sovereign Tribal officials in stopping McDermitt's case cluster.

Case Investigation and Contact Tracing

Describe the status of your contact tracing efforts, including: *The Humboldt County contact tracing work force has served as one of our community's best defenses in the spread of the coronavirus. Our force, called the Fast Team is comprised of seven employees. The team is entirely comprised of local residents who know the community and many of the residents. There are two supervisors who also work with the Humboldt County Sheriff's Office and Winnemucca Police Department. We also have five additional staffers on standby who can work on an as needed basis. They have full access to the State's Covid-19 data base and become aware of persons who have been tested for Covid and also those who have shown positive results. All patients who are tested either for symptoms or contacts are immediate quarantined. Our County has a very aggressive quarantining policy in which persons of interest who would not likely be quarantined in other counties are quarantined in ours. This has been one of Humboldt County's single most effective strategies in containing our Covid spread.*

Description of your current contact tracing workforce: *The Humboldt County contact tracing work force has served as one of our community's best defenses in the spread of the coronavirus. Our force, called the Fast Team is comprised of seven employees. The team is entirely comprised of local residents who know the community and many of the residents. There are two supervisors who also work with the Humboldt County Sheriff's Office and Winnemucca Police Department. We also have five additional staffers on standby who can work on an as needed basis. They have full access to the State's Covid-19 data base and become aware of persons who have been tested for Covid and also those who have shown positive results. All patients who are tested either for symptoms or contacts are immediate quarantined. Our County has a very aggressive quarantining policy in which persons of interest who would not likely be quarantined in other counties are quarantined in ours. This has been one of Humboldt County's single most effective strategies in containing our Covid spread.*

- Percent of positive cases contacted within 24 hours, and percent of positive case contacts contacted in 48 hours: *Almost all cases are contacted within 24 hours. The majority of those are contacted within just several hours. On interview with members of our Fast Team, we were able to learn that in the rare case in which contact could not be made within 24 hours, the reason was that phone and other contact information was incorrect or incomplete. In other cases, the person of interest was not reachable. But in those cases in which contact was not limited by the person of interest, virtually all contacts were made within 24 hours.*
- Overview contact tracing findings suggesting high-risk areas.

Protection of Vulnerable Populations

Describe your county's plans for addressing outbreaks within vulnerable populations, including:

- Overview of efforts and interventions in skilled nursing facilities.

The following response was prepared by Charles Stringham, Humboldt County Health Officer in collaboration with Leeann Cushway, Chief Nursing Officer, Humboldt General Hospital. The skilled care facility at Humboldt General Hospital is Humboldt County's only hospital-based inpatient skilled care facility. Officials at the facility have developed and implemented a comprehensive plan designed to mitigate the risk of infection with the Covid-19 virus in its residents and employees. Prior to admission into the facility, prospective residents must demonstrate two negative Covid-19 tests while being held in the hospital in isolation. Once residents qualify for admission, they adhere to strict social distancing between other residents and staff and wear masks while interacting with all others at all times. The residents are permitted to have no outside visitors at any time. The facility's staff is kept completely separate from the rest of the hospital's staff. There are no common employees who circulate between the regular acute hospital and the skilled care facility. Masks and other appropriate PPE are required of the staff at all times. The skilled care facility adheres to strict screening of both residents and staff for signs and symptoms that could indicate Covid Infection twice each day. In the next week, the facility will be adding a mandatory routine Covid-19 testing program required of all staff once every seven days. To date, there have been no Covid-19 infections in any of our skilled care facility residents.

Overview of efforts and interventions in correctional facilities: *The Humboldt County Detention Center has implemented the following procedures to reduce the risk of COVID-19 entering the Detention Facility:*

- *All inmates are screened for temperature prior to entering the detention facility. Inmates with an elevated temperature are denied and sent to the Humboldt General Hospital for medical clearance.*
- *New inmates entering the Detention Center are quarantined for a period for 14 days prior to being placed in general population.*
- *Inmates are placed in single cells to reduce contact with other inmates. Protocols in accordance with state and federal law have been put in to place to minimize person-to-person exposure while maintaining the rights and humane treatment of all inmates in the Humboldt County Detention Center.*
- *On-going medical care and COVID-19 testing is available for all inmates.*
- *UV-C Lamps are utilized for sanitizing areas within the detention center. Additionally, stringent cleaning and hygiene protocols have been implemented in the detention facility to ensure a safe and sanitary environment.*
- *No persons are permitted to enter the detention facility without temperature screening and they are required to wear face coverings at all times.*
- *All staff has been trained on the Detention Center's COVID-19 plan. All staff have an understanding of COVID-19, how the illness is spread, the signs and symptoms*

of COVID-19, and what measures are being implemented to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the facility. First line supervisors and administration strictly enforce all guidelines that are implemented.

Overview of efforts and interventions in high-risk communities: Humboldt County officials have identified several groups within our community that are at higher risk of acquiring Covid-19 and additional groups in which the virus would pose an accelerated risk of disease progression or death. We focus extra attention on disease prevention and behavior modification in these groups. The Hispanic community, for example, has both been hit hard with cases far in excess of what would have been anticipated by random chance. Also, the incidence of diabetes, hypertension, and obesity—each of which is well recognized as an accelerated risk of disease progression—are more prevalent in this population. For these reasons, our Covid response team provides all messages in Spanish. We also issue messages in the local Spanish speaking newspaper and have a group of Spanish speaking opinion leaders who help to disseminate a message of prevention, and cautious behavior. Other high-risk groups such as our elderly population have been the subjects of aggressive campaigns. Recently, the cluster of cases on the McDermitt Indian Reservation has been the subject of intense efforts to communicate with officials of this sovereign nation. Many of the Humboldt County Covid response team have reached out to our neighbors in McDermitt in hopes of effecting a change in that community's Covid response. While that community's replies to our pleas to assist have been mixed, Humboldt County officials continue attempts to assist sovereign Tribal officials in stopping McDermitt's case cluster.

Enforcement

- **County level information:**

Describe your county's enforcement efforts, including:

- Overview of county agencies engaged in enforcement: *The County relies on enforcement activities conducted by agencies with regulatory authority over businesses and specific industries. OSHA has had a presence in Humboldt County to conduct these activities.*
- Overview of the number observations conducted by county enforcement officials: *The County does not conduct observations; however, the County Board of Health has monitored events when complaints were received*
- Overview of compliance rates during county observations. *The County Board of Health observed violations related to use of masks during a rodeo event.*
- Overview of the number of violations and enforcement actions taken by county officials: *Board of Health officials advised those in attendance by loudspeaker that the event would be shut down if there was not immediate compliance with mask regulations. Compliance was observed in short order.*

- **City level information:**

- Overview of city agencies engaged in enforcement: *The City of Winnemucca does not have any agencies actively engaged in enforcement.*
- Overview of the number observations conducted by city enforcement officials: *City officials have conducted observations at two businesses and at two outdoor youth sporting events/practices.*
- Overview of the number of violations and enforcement actions taken by city officials: *City officials observed violations at two businesses. The official provided verbal guidance on how the businesses could come into compliance with the Governor's directives.*
- Overview of compliance rates during city observations: *Compliance at the two observed businesses was minimal, which was expected because the City official was responding to specific complaints about the businesses. The two youth sporting events/practices that were observed by City officials appeared to be largely in compliance with the Governor's directives.*

County Action Plan

Please provide the county's action plan for addressing COVID-19 in your communities. This plan should be tailored to the data and findings in the assessment. Ensure that metrics are provided to measure success and drive decisions. Also, ensure that you identify any state and federal resources that are necessary for implementing your plan, while noting that these resource requests must still go through the resource ordering process with the state Division of Emergency Management.

****August 26, 2020 Update****

Humboldt County has had continuing community outreach since the onset of the pandemic, and hired a public information officer specifically to conduct ongoing updates to the community which are released publicly through a multitude of public and private partners. The link to the ongoing newsletter and information is as follows: <https://spark.adobe.com/page/IIU1h2xbgNKeR/> This news release contains ongoing information on COVID cases, safety directives, local testing and community based testing events, and other pertinent information regarding COVID-19. Nicole Maher, our public information officer, has been successful in engaging Dr. Bai, the Tribal Health Officer to keep case numbers updated for the Ft. McDermitt Indian Reservation. At the time of this update, no other lines of communication or resource requests have been made between government agencies.

****August 19, 2020 Update****

In order to delineate the number of COVID-19 cases in Humboldt County and the Ft. McDermitt Indian reservation, we are relying on the following data which is accurate as of August 19, 2020. Humboldt County has had a total of 105 positive cases. Of those cases, 96 have recovered, 4 are deceased, and only 5 are active. The 5 positive cases are self-quarantined and following medical advice and guidance to prevent further spread of the virus. There are no COVID-19 patients currently admitted to the Humboldt General Hospital or other medical facilities as a result of the virus being contracted in Humboldt County. The Ft. McDermitt Indian Reservation has had a total of 77 positive cases. Of those cases, 36 have recovered, 1 is deceased, and 40 are active.

Humboldt County as a government agency has made attempts to work with all other government agencies within our jurisdiction. The City of Winnemucca has been an outstanding partner during this ongoing pandemic. The Ft. McDermitt Indian Reservation has not responded to offers of assistance, and has not made any effort to reach out to Humboldt County for assistance during the outbreak of cases on the reservation. Humboldt County as a political subdivision of the state of Nevada does not have any authority or jurisdiction over a sovereign nation, and as such are not responsible for mitigation measures due to a lack of cooperation.

Since the inception of the COVID-19 Pandemic, Humboldt County has taken appropriate measures and actions to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and to address cases in our community. The creation of the Humboldt County Health Board and Contact Tracing Teams have been successful, and it is measurable in the success of reducing contacts with infectious persons, voluntary compliance with home quarantines, and the lack of additional enforcement measures needed for person(s) infected with the COVID-19 virus.

Humboldt County declared a state of emergency at the onset of the pandemic, and has taken appropriate workplace and community safety measures. Currently, local law enforcement and government has had zero employees test positive for the COVID-19 Virus due to stringent PPE and hygiene measures taken in the workplace. We have not seen a spike of covid-19 cases related to local businesses or public areas, and we have observed voluntary compliance with state regulations related to COVID-19.

Moving forward, Humboldt County intends to continue with the Humboldt County Health Board, which has been successfully managing the cases and assessing the resources needed within our county. This is a multi-disciplinary board comprised of medical, emergency management, and government leaders. If another community based testing event is conducted, Humboldt County would need to make a resource request to the Nevada Department of Emergency Management.

Humboldt County will continue with contact tracing and managing active cases within our county. While recent events may be preempting regular updates concerning the COVID-19 pandemic, we are urging our Humboldt County residents and businesses to continue prevention practices that have gotten us where we are now. Relatively speaking, Humboldt County has done well compared to many other areas of the state and country. We have definitely seen sickness and even deaths in our county, but we must keep things in perspective and understand the statistics being presented.

Our regional COVID-19 positive numbers have risen, but this is more specifically due to the increased number of cases on the Ft. McDermitt Indian Reservation. The real gauge to use at this time is the number of hospitalizations and deaths – as this number gives us a clearer idea of the catastrophic nature of the disease. The numbers in Humboldt County continue to remain flattened with no recent significant daily increases outside of sovereign lands.