



Humboldt County Transition Plan

April 22, 2021



Overview

For the past year, Humboldt County has fought to keep coronavirus case numbers low by focusing on mask wearing, social distancing, good hand hygiene and now COVID-19 vaccination efforts. The results have been gratifying as Humboldt, along with most counties in the state, has seen its case rate and test positivity numbers decline.

As the state prepares to transition control of mitigation measures to local authorities on May 1, the following plan will show that Humboldt County has evaluated the monitoring, mitigation, enforcement, public information and resource aspects of this transition and is ready to act in the event of any upward trend in coronavirus case numbers.

Monitoring

- **COVID-19 measures and indicators.** Humboldt County will continue to rely on the three County Tracker criteria to monitor any significant spread of the virus within the county. The Humboldt County School District will continue to monitor staff and student numbers to determine any spread within the county's schools. In addition, Humboldt County will continue to track the viral RNA levels in the City of Winnemucca wastewater system. Spikes observed in the wastewater system provide a 7- to 10-day lead time for identifying any emerging COVID-19 hot spots which will allow the county to alert residents in those vicinities as needed.
- **Protection of vulnerable populations.** Humboldt County is committed to protecting its most vulnerable populations. Please consider:
 - Humboldt County's main priority is vaccinating its 65+ population. Out of 4,500 senior residents, approximately 40 percent have been fully vaccinated. The county works closely with the local senior center to disseminate information, provide outreach and generally interface with this very vulnerable group.
 - Humboldt General Hospital has developed and implemented a comprehensive plan to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 infection in its inpatient skilled nursing facility. Due to the success of that plan, limited visitation is now available and, to date, there have been no COVID-19 infections among HGH's skilled nursing facility residents.
 - The Humboldt County Detention Center has developed and implemented a comprehensive plan to reduce the risk of COVID-19 entering the detention facility, including rapid testing and quarantining of new inmates, single-cell placement, UV-C sanitization, visitor screening, and staff education and training.
 - Because Hispanic residents make up a disproportionately large number of Humboldt County's confirmed cases, the county offers all public information, including a dedicated Facebook site and vaccine information telephone line, in Spanish.
 - Humboldt County maintains near-daily contact with the Fort McDermitt Indian Reservation. While the Paiute Shoshone Tribe has opted to report separately from Humboldt County, the county remains highly aware of testing and case numbers, hospitalizations and deaths.

- **Testing and contact tracing efforts.** As Humboldt County’s case rate numbers have declined, so have its testing numbers. However, because the county’s case and test positivity rates have declined, officials are not overly concerned with low testing numbers. Still, the county continues to emphasize testing for those who have had a direct exposure or who are experiencing COVID-like symptoms. In addition to continued molecular and antigen testing through the hospital and other testing entities, the Humboldt County School District is also an approved BinaxNOW testing site. Per the governor’s directive, football players are routinely tested for COVID; any staff member experiencing symptoms or a known exposure is also tested on site. Humboldt County’s Fast Team continues to contact trace confirmed cases and/or those who have been exposed to the virus.
- **Hospital capacity management.** Humboldt General Hospital has 17 Acute and three ICU beds, five ventilators, and a 15-day supply of medication treatments. The hospital is prepared to surge to 33 beds internally as needed. The average daily census is 13. Humboldt County can deploy a field hospital with capacity for 49 patients within a 24- to 48-hour period. However, the county/hospital will need to rely on state support to staff the facility. Humboldt General Hospital’s field hospital policy calls for the unit to be deployed when HGH reaches 80 percent capacity on a daily basis *and* experiences a corresponding surge in patients. The HGH Emergency Department and inpatient medical directors will make the decision regarding deployment. Hospital officials also have access to the Nevada Hospital Association Medical Intelligence Portal. The portal is updated every day at 5 p.m. seven days a week and provides the most timely and accurate regional information for confirmed and suspected COVID hospitalizations, ICU and ventilator use.
- **Status of PPE and other materials needed.** The current status of PPE in Humboldt County is stable with no noted deficiencies. Humboldt General Hospital maintains a 30-day PPE supply; the hospital has established relationships with vendors who can help increase stores as needed. In addition, Humboldt County Emergency Management has a large store of PPE, which would meet a 14-day demand. Humboldt County has also made facial masks and hand sanitizer available to local businesses and organizations.

Mitigation Measures

- **Occupancy restrictions for public and private gatherings, events, and activities.** Humboldt County will recommend that any public or private gatherings, events or activities take place under current guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. In general, CDC guidance considers the level of risk when deciding to host an event; promotes healthy behaviors and maintains healthy environments to reduce risk when large events and gatherings are held; and remains prepared if someone gets sick during or after an event.
- **Large event gatherings:** Humboldt County will host the Ranch Hand Rodeo on May 6-10, 2021, and the 2021 Lowry High School Graduation on June 10, 2021—both at the Winnemucca Event Center. The county will recommend that participants and spectators at both events wear facial coverings. Officials are very confident that both events can happen safely and successfully; a similar rodeo (the Silver State International Rodeo) was held in July 2020 with similar

recommendations resulting in zero positive exposures.

- **Youth and adult recreational sports.** Humboldt County will allow youth and adult recreational sports to continue, but will recommend that teams follow the guidance provided in the Nevada Guidance for Adult & Youth Sports including: outdoor locations are safer than indoor; smaller groups are safer than larger; and shorter duration is safer than longer.
- **Industry-specific guidance.** As noted in Nevada’s Roadmap to Recovery: Transition Plan, Humboldt County understands that state regulators, including professional licensing boards covered in Title 54 of the Nevada Revised Statutes, state agencies, or independent regulatory bodies such as the Gaming Control Board, will continue to regulate businesses under their purview, including measures related to COVID-19 mitigation.
- **General social distancing, PPE, and hygiene requirements for businesses and public activities.** Humboldt County will continue to recommend that businesses and public activities abide by the statewide mask requirement as outlined in Directive 024.
- **Public sector work plans.** Humboldt County leaders in local government and education continue to work tirelessly to mitigate risk, while also providing services to community members, students, parents and staff. Public sector offices and school classrooms/gathering areas have established protocols to allow both staff and patrons/students to remain safe. Government offices have been retrofitted with plexiglass barriers; governments and schools have also introduced new COVID-mitigation equipment, such as air purifiers, sanitizing machines and ultraviolet irradiators. Government and schools will continue to support flexible sick leave policies for staff and students, and share plans for prevention and response, as needed, with community members, students, parents and staff. Government and schools continue to liberally use virtual meeting tools, such as Zoom, for intra-organization and community-based meetings.

Enforcement Measures

- **Regional enforcement partnership and coordination structure.** Humboldt County has a close working relationship with its two sister counties: Lander and Pershing. Many residents of all three jurisdictions cross daily into neighboring counties for work, healthcare, schooling and more. Humboldt will continue to work with Lander and Pershing to recommend compliance with the state’s mask mandate. The public health officers in all three counties have led COVID-19 mitigation measures, and the combined counties will continue to follow their guidance, as they follow state and federal directives.
- **Enforcement monitoring activities.** Approximately 99 percent of Humboldt County’s COVID-19 cases have been traced to small private gatherings. While Humboldt County has no legal ability to restrict small gatherings, local officials have been very successful with messaging campaigns focused on mitigation measures. Those educational efforts will also continue with businesses. Humboldt County has established channels for businesses to ask questions, address concerns and request COVID-mitigation guidance. The county has made facial masks and hand sanitizer readily available to businesses. All business employees are now eligible to receive the COVID vaccine. The county health officer also continues to present regular virtual “town hall meetings”

(both for the general community and individual businesses/organizations) aimed at answering questions and providing up-to-date information on the virus in Humboldt County.

- **Enforcement actions for offenses.** Humboldt County has no plans for any type of enforcement actions. The county's main goal is to continue to provide education and resources per the state's directives. Humboldt County's businesses and organizations have the most up-to-date knowledge about their publics and are therefore the most informed decision-makers regarding continued limits or lifted restrictions. The county understands that many businesses fall under the regulatory purview of state agencies and may be subject to enforcement actions through those channels.

Public Information

- **Campaigns to promote public health measures.** Since April 2020, Humboldt County has shared an aggressive messaging campaign aimed at recommending mask wearing, social distancing and frequent hand washing. These efforts will continue until the state discontinues Directive 024. These regular communications have been disseminated through traditional media, social media, municipal websites, public notification of new cases, electronic newsletters, email, mail and more, in both English and Spanish. The county also continues to encourage residents to be tested if symptomatic, or following a known exposure.
- **Campaigns to promote and inform on vaccination efforts.** Since December 2020, Humboldt County has also begun an aggressive messaging campaign to both promote and inform on vaccination efforts. These efforts have also included traditional and social media, websites, newsletters, emails, posters and more in both English and Spanish. Perhaps the most important tool has been a recorded vaccine information line (775-375-3200) in both English and Spanish. The county has collaborated with various organizations, including Humboldt General Hospital, local pharmacies, churches, the Chamber of Commerce, local businesses, the Fort McDermitt Indian Reservation and others, to discuss the importance of vaccines as well as share regarding upcoming vaccination opportunities.

Resource Needs

- **Public health, enforcement, or emergency management needs of the county.** Humboldt County has not identified any resource needs at this time. However, if the county were to experience a surge in cases and had to stand up its field hospital, local officials would look to the state for help, especially with regard to staffing.

Endorsements and Consensus

Per the request of the State of Nevada COVID-19 Mitigation and Management Task Force, Humboldt County has acquired endorsements from the Nevada Hospital Association and the Humboldt County School District, as well as consensus from the City of Winnemucca and Humboldt General Hospital.

- **Nevada Hospital Association** – Please see the included letter from the Nevada Hospital Association/Christopher K. Lake, PhD, Executive Director, Community Resilience, endorsing Humboldt County’s Transition Plan.
- **Humboldt County School District** – Humboldt County School District Superintendent David Jensen, PhD, endorsed Humboldt County’s Transition Plan with some minor revisions via a phone conference on March 26, 2021.
- **City of Winnemucca** – City of Winnemucca Mayor Rich Stone and City of Winnemucca Manager/Engineer Alicia Heiser both endorsed Humboldt County’s Transition Plan with some minor revisions via email on March 30, 2021.
- **Humboldt General Hospital** – Humboldt General Hospital CEO Tim Powers endorsed Humboldt County’s Transition Plan via email on April 12, 2021.



April 6, 2021

Dave Mendiola, Humboldt County Manager
50 W. Fifth Street
Winnemucca, NV. 89445

In the "Nevada's Roadmap to Recovery Transition Plan" released by Governor Steve Sisolak on March 15, 2021, county governments were directed to develop local mitigation and enforcement planning processes and have these plans endorsed by the Nevada Hospital Association (NHA), among others. While the NHA is not a governmental entity and is not going to usurp the authority of local elected officials, we do, however, appreciate the ability to review your local plans and provide endorsement when warranted.

For a local transition plan to receive the endorsement of our organization, certain elements must be included. These specific elements include:

- An emphasis on vaccinating the public.
- A plan to monitor hospital status for both possible COVID-19 patient saturation and the adequacy of patients' access to care.
- Monitoring local PPE sufficiency.
- Social distancing enforcement efforts.

After a thorough review of the Humboldt County plans, the Nevada Hospital Association is providing the required endorsement. We look forward to working with you as the state transitions to normalcy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Chris Lake", is written over a faint, larger version of the signature.

Christopher K. Lake, PhD.
Executive Director, Community Resilience