

I take my job as Teton District Health Officer seriously, and since the earliest days of this pandemic I have strived to make the best decisions possible to protect the health of our community given the many unknowns and uncertainties of our situation. I have written and spoken publicly in the past about how those decisions require carefully weighing the costs and benefits of our interventions.

Teton County's two public health orders, for mass gathering and closure of selected businesses, were the first in our state. As required by state statute, they were signed by me and by the State Health Officer, Dr. Alexia Harrist. They were also the direct templates for state-wide orders that followed.

Since our first two orders, my focus has been on stay-at-home or self-isolation. With the help of the Teton County Attorney's Office I began drafting such orders 8 days ago, initially for individuals susceptible to severe illness, and they have been on the desk of the State Health Officer in various forms since Monday, March 23 at which time we had only two confirmed coronavirus cases. Today is Saturday, March 28 and I am told the order was just signed as of 11 minutes prior to this meeting. During that time the state has indicated they are "not yet" willing to consider signing a community-wide stay-at-home order.

The process of getting my orders approved and signed by the State has been excruciating. I have made slow and delayed progress which continues to jeopardize our community.

During the time my orders have been in the state's hands, we have seen cases of COVID-19 in Teton County increase by 650%. We have also seen mounting evidence that community wide stay-at-home orders can have significant impacts on slowing the virus' spread, particularly when implemented in the early phase of viral community spread. We are in that phase now.

I am absolutely in favor of a community-wide stay-at-home order. I therefore support a Town of Jackson ordinance and strongly recommend that residents of Teton County outside of Town limits heed the same restrictions. I will submit a county-wide stay-at-home order to the state today. I encourage members of the community to contact the Governor's office and urge that he approve Teton County's orders with no further delay.