



For Immediate Release: May 14, 2021

Tri-County Health Department Moves Adams and Arapahoe Counties to Level Clear May 16
Businesses may fully open as 90-day observation period begins

On May 16, the Tri-County Health Department (TCHD) will move Adams and Arapahoe counties to Level Clear on the Simplified Dial, entering the Phase 2 Observation Period of the [Public Health Order Simplified COVID-19 Dial](#) issued in April. Douglas County had previously opted out of TCHD's Simplified Dial order. In addition, the TCHD face covering order will expire May 16, 2021, as previously scheduled and allow an additional 24 hours for our counties to fully understand the details of the State's newly modified face -mask order.

Under Level Clear, Adams and Arapahoe counties will enter a 90-day Observation Period during which businesses, schools, restaurants and other facilities will be able to open at 100 percent capacity. There will be no further restrictions beyond the state's mask-wearing requirements for indoor spaces and any state public health orders still in effect. The move to Level Clear is part of a measured regional approach to safe reopening that happens side-by-side with continuing efforts to vaccinate Colorado residents against COVID-19.

"This move to Level Clear is possible because residents of Adams and Arapahoe Counties are choosing to get vaccinated and have continued high levels of compliance in wearing masks and practicing social distancing," said John M. Douglas, Jr., MD, Executive Director of the Tri-County Health Department. "This is happening because community partners are continuing to work together and those partnerships will help our communities stay fully open. And now that the FDA and CDC have approved use of the Pfizer vaccine for children ages 12 to 15, the benefits of vaccination can be extended to even greater portions of our communities."

While the move to Level Clear is very encouraging and long awaited, it leaves many people uncertain of how to prevent and protect themselves from COVID-19, which is not gone yet and can still impact people's lives. The number one way people can protect themselves and others is to be vaccinated as soon as possible. The TCHD website is also another source of helpful guidance for those who have loved ones that may not be able to be vaccinated such as children under 12 and those with weakened immune systems who may not optimally respond to the vaccine. There is also good information from both the CDC and the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment that provides guidance on returning to work and our daily lives while still living with COVID-19 on the TCHD website. Finally, TCHD will provide updated guidance on mask wearing for our school, childcare centers, and businesses once we have a final understanding on details from the State.

Under Level Clear's 90-day Observation Period that begins May 16, TCHD health officials will closely observe and monitor local conditions, paying particular attention to the rates of hospital admission. Counties may be moved to a more restrictive level on the Simplified Dial if they experience hospital admission rates higher than two hospital admissions per 100,000 people. The hospital admission rate is an important health metric that indicates the severity of COVID-19 infections. Adams and Arapahoe Counties have not surpassed this metric since January of 2021 and we are hopeful that increased vaccination rates as well as other prevention strategies will keep all hospitalizations below this threshold moving forward.

While the move to Level Clear is an encouraging step in this ongoing pandemic, it is extremely important for those still unvaccinated to learn about the benefits of being vaccinated and seek opportunities to do so. Additionally, while guidance on mask wearing and social distancing is rapidly evolving, it is important to carry out these measures in appropriate circumstances, particularly for those not yet vaccinated. As of May 11, 691,137 (56.5 percent) of Adams, Arapahoe and Douglas county residents have received at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine. Of those, 537,308 (43.9 percent) have had all the doses needed to be fully vaccinated. Vaccines are one of the most powerful tools in stopping the spread of COVID-19 and public health experts estimate that 70 to 80 percent of the population must be vaccinated to stop the spread.

For more information about what the transition to Level Clear means and how it affects residents of Adams and Arapahoe counties, visit www.tchd.org/825/Public-Health-Orders. Find more information about COVID-19 vaccines and where to get vaccinated at www.tchd.org/COVIDVaccine

-end-

Tri-County Health Department serves over 1.5 million people in Adams, Arapahoe and Douglas Counties. It provides over 60 programs and services including birth certificates, immunizations, WIC, restaurant inspections, family planning, STI/HIV Testing, and infectious disease investigations. For more information, visit www.tchd.org Twitter @TCHDHealth or Facebook @cotchd.