

County health officer releases plan for next phase of reopening activities

June 11, 2020

Reopening **DEL NORTE**



The county's health officer has released his plan to implement the Governor's office and the State Health Department's (CDPH) green light for counties to partially move into the next stage of reopening.

In a letter to the community Thursday, Dr. Warren Rehwaldt wrote after consulting with a number of officials in the county, including in the Crescent City and Del Norte County governments and the Office of Emergency Services, the County Department of Health Services came up with the following schedule:

- June 12 — Campgrounds, RV parks and vacation rentals can open to non-essential travelers. Hotels can also open to tourists, but only up to 50% capacity. Aquariums and outdoor recreation sites can open. (Outdoor recreation refers to commercial operations, such as kayak tours or guided bicycle rides.)
- June 26 — Hotels can move to full capacity. Museums, galleries and family entertainment can open.
- July 10 — Fitness centers can open.
- July 24 — Bars can open.

Rehwaldt explained that for the most part, the state strategy was to focus on areas that have greater economic impact. However, Rehwaldt said he told members of the Del Norte County Board of Supervisors at their

meeting Tuesday that opening everything at once was not on the table, “not on my watch anyway.”

“That would be reckless, and not very strategic. Our original plan to reopen is now pretty much out of date as it was spread out over about 12-16 weeks, to allow measurement of the effects of reopening,” Rehwaldt wrote. “So, we are still going to open in steps, but I think that we can move things into play a little faster than we had planned before.”

Rehwaldt explained the various activities were stratified based on what his office considered to be the risk involved of re-opening them. He added each group of businesses will have specific orders to allow re-opening.

“The date for opening is the earliest that they may, and depends on submitting plan documents to us, to show that they have taken COVID-19 into account as they re-open for business and that they have consulted the website that has CDPH Guidance for each type of business,” Rehwaldt said.

Rehwaldt then outlined what he considered the most important part of the next phase of reopening activities – public participation, with everyone needing to be more careful than ever. He recommended the following safe practices:

- Wear masks in public places.
- Don’t go anywhere when you are sick.
- Practice good hygiene.
- Get tested for COVID-19.
- If you are vulnerable to COVID-19 by virtue of age or illness, stay sheltering-in-place. The world is going to be less safe for you.
- If you think you might have COVID-19, and are waiting for a test result, stay home and isolate yourself. Then start thinking about who you might have come in contact with.

“If your test is positive, or someone that you have been in contact with has a positive test, we are going to be giving you a call,” Rehwaldt wrote. “Be prepared to help us figure out who in your life might have been exposed as well. That is the best way to protect your friends and family, and the best way for us to protect the community.”

Rehwaldt added that health officials really need people to keep the personal habits to prevent COVID front and center in their daily life and to be ready to help them with contact tracing.

“These are the best ways to avoid the worst outcome, that COVID disease starts to take hold in our county, and we are forced to go back to shelter-in-place,” Rehwaldt said. “People need to know that this is a possibility and having to do so would undo a lot of hard work and put a lot of Del Norte residents at risk. We do not want to see the reopening fall apart, so help us keep this process safe for all.”

