March 16, 2020

Witnessing world, nation or even state events as seen through our media outlets, we often feel blessed to live in such a pristine, rural mountain town such as Lake City because it gives us a sense of peace and security. I’ve heard it said many times that in Lake City, we all take care of each other: it’s just what we do. We look out for our neighbors and take pride in our resiliency. Isn’t that why so many of us choose this as our home? Resiliency, however, does not mean that we are immune.

Those at most risk for contracting and having more severe outcomes from COVID-19 are elderly individuals, those with compromised immune systems or those who have other underlying health issues, especially illnesses affecting respiratory systems. The age, condition, and health of a significant portion of the population in Hinsdale County places it at risk of serious health complications, including death, from COVID-19. Although many individuals who contract COVID-19 do not become critically ill, persons with mild-moderate symptoms and asymptomatic persons with COVID-19 may place other vulnerable members of the public at significant risk.

We also recognize that while our community has a number of incredibly talented medical professionals at our Medical Center as well as those serving on EMS, a surge of any kind on our healthcare system would easily exceed the facility and personnel capacity locally, as well as those within our neighboring healthcare systems. We want to make sure our healthcare providers are not overloaded and can continue providing necessary services to other daily routine calls.

Our community knows that the power of small-town living includes everything from lending a hand to our neighbors, to the enormous amount of compassion, work, support and resiliency it takes to survive large-scale disasters and emergency situations like last year’s avalanches and flood events. Knowing there is an increase in virus spread activity in Gunnison and throughout Colorado, we urge everyone to listen once again to our tried and true Lake City motto, “Take care of one another”.

Even if you are not concerned about contracting the COVID-19 virus yourself, please be respectful of others by doing your part to protect those members of our community who might have a more severe outcome if exposed to the virus. When traveling outside the community, exercise extreme caution by utilizing proper sanitizing measures as often as possible during travel and upon return.

Public Health is also doing what it can to keep community members as safe and protected as possible. Today, like many other communities throughout the state of Colorado, we issued Public Health Orders to restrict social gatherings and events of 50 people or more. Restaurants, events and gatherings under 50 must adhere to advised social distancing requirements. We know social distancing is an effective
preventative measure to help reduce the spread of transmission. We recognize this is a big undertaking in our community, but feel confident it is extremely necessary at this time.

Thank you for your understanding and commitment to protect our amazing community and all within it.

Tara Hardy,
Public Health Director
Silver Thread Public Health District