

**Lincoln County**  
**City-County Board of Health Agenda**  
**Emergency Meeting**  
**4:00 PM, April 13, 2020**

- 1. Call to Order**
- 2. Pledge of Allegiance**
- 3. Roll Call**
- 4. Covid-19 Update**
- 5. National Public Health Emergency Request Letter**
- 6. Health Officer Update**
- 7. Public comment**
- 8. Adjourn**

The BOH is following recommendations for social distancing. Please attend this meeting remotely on Zoom or conference call.

To join the Zoom meeting:

<https://zoom.us/j/9984346152>

Meeting ID: 998 434 6152

For audio conferencing dial:

(253) 215-8782 or (669) 900-9128 or (346) 248-7799 or (312) 626-6799

Meeting ID: 998 434 6152

# City-County Board of Health for Lincoln County

418 Mineral Ave  
Libby, MT 59923



TO: Senators Daines and Tester

FROM: Lincoln City County Board of Health

RE: Lincoln County National Public Health Emergency Declaration

DATE: April 13, 2020

Dear Senators

The Lincoln City-County Board of Health wants to share our understanding of the gravity of the COVID-19 nationwide health emergency pandemic. We also want to state our appreciation for the work that each of you are doing on behalf of the citizens of Montana.

In June of 2009, the US Environmental Protection Agency designated Libby as the first National Public Health Emergency in the nation, which is still in place today. Thousands of our citizens have been diagnosed with Asbestos Related Disease (ARD), and many have passed, including hundreds of family members, friends, and neighbors. Approximately 25% of residents of Libby and Troy are currently afflicted, at varying severities, with ARD. This is in addition to the other underlying health conditions seen in other counties.

Lincoln County recently suffered the first fatality in the state from the COVID-19. There will likely be more fatalities, as there is an extremely high population of "higher-risk individuals". As rural/frontier community with a Critical Access Hospital, the county faces limited healthcare under normal conditions, let alone this unprecedented crisis.

Our most effective management model is a robust testing system. The biggest threat to management is the asymptomatic populace. Testing the symptomatic alone is chasing the virus, whereas random testing will allow us to diagnose asymptomatic "carriers", isolate them and keep carriers from our high-risk populace.

The Board of Health has four primary questions/requests:

1. What authorities does the 2009 National Public Health designation provide for non-traditional access to Federal/State resources?
2. There is a need to perform approximately 1300 tests randomly on asymptomatic residents monthly. A centralized specimen collection site plan has been developed and successfully implemented. However, we lack the supplies, specifically, the test swabs and testing equipment.
3. For the next four weeks, 600 test swabs are needed with an additional 1300 test swabs monthly to sustain an appropriate surveillance operation and statistical data.

4. The county needs to expand testing capabilities, which means additional equipment to meet the needs of testing. Testing for a large number of specimens needs to be performed locally with a reliable method and rapid turnaround results. A detailed listing of required supplies and equipment can be found in attachment 1.

Any assistance in clarification on any authorities contained within the National Public Health Emergency and in procurement of testing supplies would be greatly appreciated. If you are in need of further information or we can assist you in any way, please contact me, Dr. Brad Black at 406-283-1026 or Commissioner Mark Peck at 406-291-8425. Once again, any assistance provided is greatly appreciated, and stay healthy and safe.

Sincerely,

Janet Ivers, RN, MSN

Chair Lincoln City-County Board of Health

406 293-2365

## [attachment 1]

### Current Testing Supply Needs (4/8/20):

#800 Nasal Swabs

### Monthly Testing Supplies (recurring over 12 months)

- Test kits
  - Nasal Swabs- 1,300 per month
  - transport tubes with vtm or saline- 1,300 per month
- Biohazard bags 1,300 small, 20 medium per month
- Gloves- medium and large
- Gowns- 50 per month
- Face shields- 5 reusable
- Surgical masks- 2,000 per month
- N95 masks- 40 per month
- Testing apparatus: Biofire FA Torch Module Box (part # HTFA-ASY-0003) – 2 only
- Testing kits: BioFire COVID-19 Reagent Packs (#423744) – 1,000 tests per month
- BioFire Quality control material (#423748)

April 10, 2020

Re: Lincoln County Health Department COVID-19 testing directives

The focus of our county's testing activities will surround our efforts to understand Coronavirus exposure risk in our communities. Continuously testing will ensure that:

- We have up to date knowledge of the risk of acquiring COVID-19 in our communities
- We understand if the virus is being transmitted within Lincoln County communities. Approximately 1 in 4 people with Coronavirus have no symptoms but are able to spread the virus to others.
- We will have the ability to intervene and stop the spread of Coronavirus when it is detected, reducing risk to all, especially our large population of high risk individuals who are over age 60, have lung disease, or have heart disease.
- We are monitoring risk into the future so that we can lessen or, if necessary, escalate social distancing restrictions without shutdown based on our findings.
- To this end, efforts are being made to target not just ill, but also asymptomatic individuals whose occupations are associated with frequent public contact in businesses that remain open during the social distancing period.
- Businesses being targeted include grocery stores, convenience stores, healthcare organizations, emergency responders such as police and ambulance, and others such as hardware stores that remain open and have frequent public contact.
- Lincoln County will actively reach out to these businesses in order to recruit asymptomatic individuals from the above categories for COVID-19 testing.
- A clear message will be sent from the Health Department alerting the targeted community members of the availability of free Coronavirus testing. In addition, asymptomatic individuals will be allowed to work immediately after testing without any period of isolation pending their test results.
- Continued collaboration with our testing partners will be pursued to ensure that patients tested do not incur any costs.
- Two different information letters will be drafted and given out to those participating in testing. One will be for those who are symptomatic directing self-isolation. The other will be for those who are asymptomatic allowing for return to work without restrictions.
- Testing will continue until supplies are exhausted with the exception of 50 tests which will be held for availability if a positive case is identified. Staff will continue to pursue acquisition of testing materials.
- As testing supplies become more available, Lincoln County will consider opening up testing to the general public with the goal of 1,300 tests per month.

Sincerely,



Brad Black, MD  
Lincoln County Health Officer