



Humboldt County Jurisdictional Assessment and Action Plan

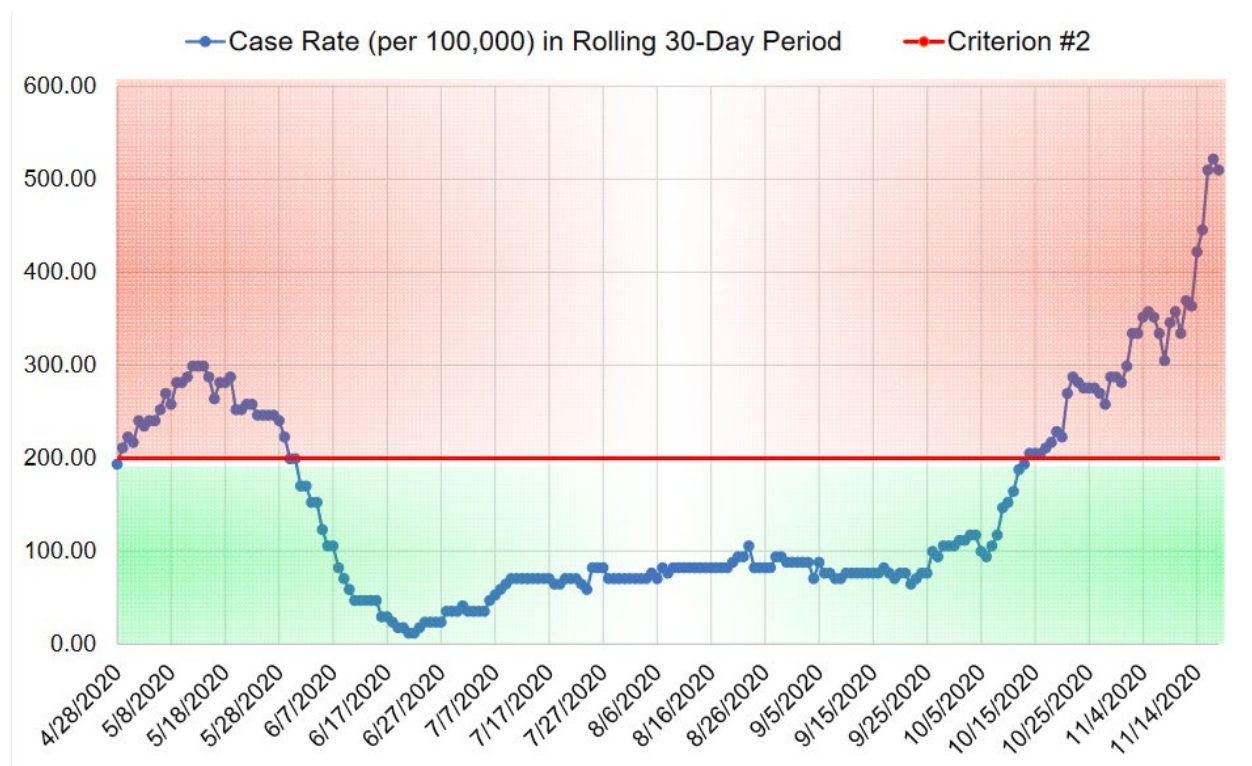
Updated: November 18, 2020



Overall Assessment

Humboldt County became a focal point of the pandemic early on, due entirely to exposures that resulted from a family gathering in late March/early April. The county's case rate rose quickly; however, the Humboldt County Health Board and Humboldt County Health Officer Charles Stringham, MD, initiated a messaging campaign focused on wearing masks, distancing socially and washing hands frequently, and cases waned.

Since that time, the county has incorporated many precautionary measures to prevent initial infection or to limit transmission once infected. These measures have served to limit the virus's progression until recently.



These measures, in English and Spanish, have included:

- Continued messaging regarding the importance of wearing masks, distancing socially, washing hands frequently.
- Encouragement to be tested if symptomatic or following a known exposure.
- Regular communication regarding coronavirus-related issues/updates through traditional media, social media, municipal websites and more.
- Regular meetings of the Humboldt County Health Board to identify strategies and tactics to mitigate the virus's spread.
- Implementation of the Fast Team contract tracing team.

- Utilization of the HGH EMS Rescue Community Paramedic team to monitor persons isolated or quarantined with COVID-19 and to help facilitate their needs.
- Implementation of a wastewater tracking program to early identify any emerging COVID-19 hot spots.
- Close communication with the Humboldt County School District to help identify and mitigate the spread of the virus within the county’s schools.
- Close communication with the area’s mining companies to help identify and mitigate the spread of the virus within mining populations.
- Multiple community flu PODS within Humboldt County, where over 1,000 have been vaccinated, to help protect residents against the flu and conserve resources for COVID-19.
- Regular communication with the Fort McDermitt Indian Reservation with regard to testing, case numbers, hospitalizations and deaths.

Below is a look at Humboldt County’s daily case average by month, from the county’s first case on March 26 to November 18 (the date of this report).

| March/April | May | June | July | August | September | October | November |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| 45 cases 1.32 cases/day | 34 cases 1.1 cases/day | 6 cases .2 cases/day | 13 cases .4 cases/day | 15 cases .5 cases/day | 19 cases .6 cases/day | 49 cases 1.58 cases/day | 80 cases (Nov. 1-18) 4.4 cases/day |

No single factor completely explains the recent increase in cases; however, five points do merit mention as part of Humboldt County’s proposed mitigation and management efforts moving forward:

- It has been taking 7-10 days for test results to return from the state lab, which is creating significant difficulties with the county’s contact tracing efforts.
- Many residents in Humboldt County are choosing not to be tested due to cost and loss-of-work concerns.
- Many cases are tied to travel and small gatherings; the county also is seeing high instances of community transmission that are not tied to known cases of infection.
- More activities are moving indoors, including schools, gatherings and more, likely precipitating an increase in cases.
- The county is seeing high instances of community transmission that are not tied to known cases of infection, which significantly hinders contact tracing efforts.

Assessment Summary

- Humboldt County was flagged for elevated disease transmission by the State of Nevada’s COVID-19 Mitigation and Management Task Force for the weeks of October 26 and November 2. On November 16, the county was flagged again after dropping off the previous week.
- As of November 18, Humboldt County has a cumulative total of 258 cases of COVID-19. In all,

198 people have recovered, 56 cases are active and four people have died.

- Also, as of November 18, the Fort McDermitt Paiute Shoshone Tribe has a cumulative total of 136 cases of COVID-19. In all, 115 people have recovered, 20 cases are active and one person has died.
- Humboldt County is seeing its highest positivity numbers to date with many cases tied to travel, small gatherings and community transmission.
- During October, Humboldt County averaged 1.58 cases/day—a significant increase from March/April (its previous high) of 1.32 cases/day. So far in November, the county is averaging 4.4 cases/day.
- Humboldt County has seen a significant increase in cases among adults, especially older adults in their 60s, 70s and 80s.
- Currently, six Humboldt County residents are hospitalized for COVID-19, including five locally. No ventilators are in use locally; no patients are in ICU locally.
- The status of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) remains good in Humboldt County.

Hospital Capacity

Describe the status of staffed ICU beds, ventilators, staffing, medication treatments, and PPE:

Humboldt General Hospital has 17 Acute and three ICU beds, five ventilators, and a 15-day supply of medication treatments. The hospital is prepared to surge to 33 beds internally as needed. The unit is currently staffed at 100 percent. The average daily census is 16; currently no ICU beds are filled and no ventilators are in use. The HGH Emergency Department is seeing approximately 25-30 patients daily; on average, five patients each day present with COVID-19 symptoms.

Describe the status of Alternate Care Facility planning, staffing, and implementation. Humboldt County can deploy a field hospital with capacity for 49 patients within a 24- to 48-hour period. However, the county/hospital will not be able to staff the facility and will need to rely on state implementation.

Describe your current assessment of overall hospital capacity and metrics that will determine expansion to Alternate Care Facilities: Humboldt General Hospital's field hospital policy calls for the unit to be deployed when HGH reaches 80 percent capacity on a daily basis *and* experiences a corresponding surge in patients. The HGH Emergency Department and Hospitalist medical directors will make the decision regarding deployment.

Access to Personal Protective Equipment

Humboldt General Hospital maintains a 30-day supply of Personal Protective Equipment. The hospital has been utilizing the Battel N-95 Sanitization process and reports no issues with maintaining PPE. Humboldt County maintains a 30-day supply of PPE; officials continue to identify available vendors to increase stores as needed. Weekly updates are conducted.

Describe the county's distribution priorities. Personal Protective Equipment is distributed to frontline healthcare workers, EMS, first responders, and essential government workers who are at increased risk of exposure to coronavirus and/or who work with patients at the highest risk for severe health outcomes. Providing PPE to these individuals may also help prevent shortages of healthcare staff due to illness, and preserve the healthcare system.

If PPE is required by state regulations as part of routine duties performed by essential workers, the following guidelines, in accordance with FEMA and state regulations, are implemented:

- Extend use times of undamaged, non-visibly soiled PPE, and implement expanded facility-based PPE reuse policies and procedures.
- Adapt and implement Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) strategies for healthcare to optimize the supply of PPE and equipment, and best practices to sustain PPE supplies.
- Implement decontamination and reuse strategies of filtering face piece respirators as contingency and crisis capacity measures.
- Use alternative types or sources of PPE to support necessary operations. Use National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH)-approved respiratory protection that was not previously approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Monitor FDA and Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) websites for updates and announcements on relaxed enforcement and Emergency Use Authorizations.
- Consult guidance from CDC's NIOSH on strategies to conserve, extend and respond to shortages in the supply of filtering face piece respirators (FFRs) used in non-healthcare worksites.

If PPE is not required by state regulations as part of routine duties performed by essential workers, the following guidelines in accordance with FEMA and state regulations are implemented:

- Implement exposure-reduction measures, such as barrier controls (e.g., Plexiglass barriers, improved ventilation systems) and safe-work practices, such as adjusting business operations to increase physical space between employees. Consult CDC's Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers to Plan and Respond to COVID-19 for further considerations to reduce overall risk of exposure in the workplace.
- Do not attempt to acquire medical or industrial use PPE for such employees. Such PPE is likely unavailable and is required for other higher priority critical infrastructure functions. Surgical masks or N95 respirators are critical supplies that must continue to be reserved for healthcare workers and other medical first responders, as recommended by current CDC guidance.
- Instead, follow CDC guidance on use of simple cloth face coverings. CDC recommends wearing cloth face coverings in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain (e.g., control rooms, production floors), especially in areas of significant community-based transmission.

Describe your current assessment of overall PPE and metrics that will be used to determine additional emergency measures. The current assessment of overall PPE status in Humboldt County is stable, with no noted deficiencies. Individual agencies and organizations utilizing PPE measure the burn rate and identify specific types of PPE to be obtained as needed, based on the ongoing needs of the agencies. Humboldt County as a governmental entity has obtained PPE for first responders and essential employees, and Emergency Management has PPE supplies in reserve which would meet a 14-day demand if necessary.

Testing Capacity

Humboldt County residents may be tested for COVID-19 at the following locations:

- **Humboldt General Hospital Screening Clinic** - Offers drive-thru screening for asymptomatic and symptomatic persons Monday through Friday. To date, 189 of Humboldt County's 258 cases have been tested through HGH.
- **Golden Valley Medical Center** - Private medical clinic owned by Nevada Gold. Offers asymptomatic and symptomatic screening by appointment only. To date, 13 of Humboldt County's 258 cases have been tested through Golden Valley.
- **Ridley's Pharmacy** - Offers in-vehicle, self-administered asymptomatic and symptomatic screening via online appointment. To date, 20 of Humboldt County's 244 cases have been tested through the Ridley's Pharmacy.
- **Humboldt County Community Health** - Offers asymptomatic screening by appointment only. Since May 18, Community Health has completed 65 tests with no positives. One positive was confirmed through National Guard community-based testing in May, which was overseen by Humboldt County Community Health and the Nevada Division of Public and Behavioral Health.
- **HGH Emergency Department** – Tests patients with COVID-like symptoms 24 hours a day.
- **Fort McDermitt Wellness Center** – Offers asymptomatic and symptomatic testing for members of the Fort McDermitt Paiute and Shoshone Tribe using the Wellness Center's Abbott machine. To date, 108 of the tribe's 124 cases were tested through the Wellness Center, while eight were tested out of area and eight were tested through the National Guard community-based testing on July 26.
- **Lucid Laboratory/Dayton, Ohio** – The Hycroft Mine has hired an independent company to conduct COVID-19 testing for mine employees in Humboldt County. The results are processed through Lucid Laboratory in Dayton, Ohio. To date, two of Humboldt County's 244 cases have been tested through Lucid Laboratory.

Description of your testing criteria. Humboldt County's overarching philosophy is to offer COVID-19 screening to anyone who desires to be tested. The county encourages those with COVID-like symptoms and/or a known exposure to be tested as soon as possible; close contacts who are identified through contact tracing also are asked to test. In addition, asymptomatic persons from various private and public sector employers within the community test routinely. Humboldt General Hospital, for example,

requires pre-surgery patients, new hires and others to be tested. Other employers within the county also require pre-hire and/or routine on-the-job testing.

Overview of the number of people tested in a day/week.

- **Humboldt General Hospital Screening Clinic** – Humboldt General Hospital has completed 2,576 tests since March 2020. On average, 20 people test each day (100 each week) in the screening clinic with another five daily (35 weekly) in the Emergency Department. Each week, approximately 110 staff and residents in the hospital's Long-Term Care units are tested; pre-surgery patients, new admits and new hires also are screened.
- **Golden Valley Medical Center** – No data on daily/weekly testing.
- **Ridley's Pharmacy** – No data on daily/weekly testing.
- **Humboldt County Community Health** – Humboldt County Community Health has completed 65 tests since May. On average, 10 asymptomatic people are tested each month.
- **Fort McDermitt Wellness Center** – The Fort McDermitt Wellness Center has completed 1,566 tests since July 2020. On average, 12 people are tested each day (85 each week). Forty-seven members of the reservation were also community tested by the National Guard on July 26.
- **Lucid Laboratory/Dayton, Ohio** – No data on daily/weekly testing.

Overview of targeted testing efforts for high-risk communities, outbreak intervention, and other efforts. Humboldt County officials have identified several groups within the community that are at higher risk of acquiring COVID-19, and additional groups in which the virus would pose an accelerated risk of disease progression or death, including the following:

- Humboldt County has reached out to its Spanish-speaking community on a routine basis to encourage testing for symptomatic persons or those who have a known exposure. The Humboldt County School District provides COVID-related information in Spanish. Spanish-speaking Fast Team members are assigned to work with Spanish-speaking community members to ensure they are aware of isolation, quarantine and other guidelines.
- Humboldt County has specifically targeted its senior population with customized testing and flu POD events. The county works closely with the local senior center to disseminate information, provide outreach and generally interface with this very vulnerable group.
- The county continues outreach efforts to the Fort McDermitt Indian Reservation including regular communication concerning testing, case numbers, hospitalizations and deaths.
- Humboldt County held several large-scale community testing events with the National Guard in May where approximately 1,000 asymptomatic people were tested. Multiple flu PODs aimed at various populations, including the elderly, the schools and the immunocompromised, took place in October with over 1,000 participants.
- In October and November, Humboldt County has mailed and/or hand-posted approximately 1,500 flyers to residents of specific neighborhoods after wastewater testing showed high

concentrations of COVID-19 disease clusters in those vicinities. The county plans to continue to alert residents to high concentrations throughout the City of Winnemucca as needed.

Case Investigation and Contact Tracing

Description of your current contact tracing workforce. The Humboldt County Fast Team has served as one of our community's best defenses in the spread of COVID-19. The team is entirely comprised of local residents who know the community and many of its residents. Team members have full access to the State's COVID-19 database, allowing them to remain aware of persons who have been tested for COVID and also those who have shown positive results. Symptomatic persons or those considered a "close contact" are immediately asked to quarantine. The county has a very aggressive quarantining policy. This has been one of Humboldt County's most effective strategies in containing the spread of COVID-19.

Percent of positive cases contacted within 24 hours, and percent of positive case contacts contacted in 48 hours. Nearly 100 percent of positive cases are contacted within 24 hours, although the majority are contacted within several hours. In the rare instance that the Fast Team is not able to make immediate contact with a positive case, it is usually due to incorrect phone or contact information and/or the person of interest was not reachable.

Overview of contact tracing findings suggesting high-risk areas. Humboldt County's Fast Team has identified several high-risk areas as follows:

- Contact tracers have identified several recent cases that have resulted from travel, either local residents traveling out of area, or residents' family members traveling to Humboldt County from out of area.
- Contact tracers have identified gatherings—especially small family/friend gatherings—as a high-risk environment for positive cases.
- Contact tracers have identified the county's schools as potential high-risk areas for COVID-19 spread, and have enacted very specific mitigation protocols in coordination with district officials.
- Contact tracers have identified non-compliant positive cases and/or non-compliant "close contacts" as a dangerous source of COVID-19 spread. Tracers have recently begun meeting with representatives from Humboldt General Hospital's screening clinic to ensure a clear and uniform message regarding isolation/quarantine. The county is also working on a campaign specifically designed to encourage interaction with the tracers.
- Contact tracers have identified an increase in asymptomatic cases, which means that the virus is being spread without the knowledge of infected persons.

Protection of Vulnerable Populations

Overview of efforts and interventions in skilled nursing facilities. Humboldt General Hospital has Humboldt County's only hospital-based inpatient skilled nursing facility. Officials at the facility have

developed and implemented a comprehensive plan designed to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 infection with regard to both residents and employees. Prior to admission into the facility, prospective residents must demonstrate two negative COVID-19 tests while in hospital isolation. Once residents qualify for admission, they adhere to strict social distancing and mask wearing precautions. The residents are not permitted any outside visitors and the facility's staff is kept completely separate from the rest of the hospital's staff. There are no common employees who circulate between the regular acute hospital and the skilled nursing facility. Masks and other appropriate PPE are required of staff at all times. Currently, staff are tested weekly for COVID-19, while residents are tested every 3-7 days. Both residents and staff also are screened for signs and symptoms that could indicate COVID Infection twice each day. To date, there have been no COVID-19 infections among HGH's skilled nursing facility residents.

Overview of efforts and interventions in correctional facilities. The Humboldt County Detention Center has implemented the following procedures to reduce the risk of COVID-19 entering the detention facility:

- The Humboldt County Detention Center employs a nurse five days each week who can rapid test inmates as they enter the facility for the first time, or upon any sign of symptoms.
- New inmates entering the detention center are quarantined for a period for 14 days prior to being placed in the general population.
- Inmates are placed in single cells to reduce contact with other inmates. Protocols in accordance with state and federal law have been put in to place to minimize person-to-person exposure while maintaining the rights and humane treatment of all inmates in the detention facility.
- On-going medical care and COVID-19 testing is available for all inmates.
- UV-C Lamps are utilized for sanitizing areas within the detention center. Additionally, stringent cleaning and hygiene protocols have been implemented in the detention facility to ensure a safe and sanitary environment.
- No persons are permitted to enter the detention facility without temperature screening; all visitors are required to wear face coverings at all times.
- All staff has been trained on the detention center's COVID-19 plan. All staff have an understanding of COVID-19, how the illness is spread, the signs and symptoms of COVID-19, and what measures are being implemented to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the facility. First line supervisors and administration strictly enforce all guidelines that are implemented.

Overview of efforts and interventions in high-risk communities. Humboldt County officials have identified several groups within the community that are at higher risk for acquiring COVID-19, and additional groups in which the virus would pose an accelerated risk of disease progression or death, including the following:

- The Hispanic community has been hit hard with cases far in excess of what would have been anticipated by random chance. Also, the incidence of diabetes, hypertension, and obesity—each of which is well recognized as an accelerated risk of disease progression—are more prevalent in

this population. For these reasons, the county's COVID response team provides all messaging in Spanish via traditional and social media. Spanish speaking opinion leaders also help disseminate messages of prevention and cautious behavior.

- The county's elderly population has specifically been targeted with weekly newsletters, flyers and notices of health-related events, including a community-wide COVID testing event in May and a flu POD in October that was specific to that population.
- The county continues outreach efforts to the Fort McDermitt Indian Reservation including regular communication concerning testing, case numbers, hospitalizations and deaths. Fort McDermitt saw an alarming rise in cases over the past two months; with a collaborative effort between federal, state and local officials, Fort McDermitt's case rate has dramatically slowed.
- Humboldt County held several large-scale community testing events with the National Guard in May where approximately 1,000 asymptomatic people were tested. Multiple flu PODs aimed at various populations, including the elderly, the schools and the immunocompromised, took place in October with over 1,000 participants.
- In October and November, Humboldt County has mailed and/or hand-posted approximately 1,500 flyers to residents of specific neighborhoods after wastewater testing showed high concentrations of COVID-19 disease clusters in those vicinities. The county plans to continue to alert residents to high concentrations throughout the City of Winnemucca as needed.

County/City Enforcement

Overview of county/city agencies engaged in enforcement. Early in Humboldt County's fight against COVID-19, the Humboldt County Health Board established the Humboldt County Business Educator Program. In April and May 2020, this group of county and city officials worked with local businesses and organizations via mail, phone and in person to answer questions, address concerns and make recommendations for more comprehensive on-site virus mitigation measures. Starting Monday, November 16, the Humboldt County Business Educator Program has been reinstated with the following goals:

- Send out a letter to all businesses in Humboldt County outlining expectations for business/organizational virus mitigation measures.
- Conduct a media campaign aimed at reminding retailers and consumers to work toward a "COVID-Free Christmas."
- Share an email address that will allow citizens to ask questions, address concerns and make recommendations for heightened virus mitigation measures.
- Provide notice to individual businesses/organizations regarding complaints and request a written plan for solution.
- Follow up with individual business/organizations that receive complaints to ensure accepted solutions are in progress.

While the county and city have no legal ability to restrict small gatherings, the Humboldt County Health Board is in the process of launching a public relations campaign that will focus on the idea of "gifting"

health and protection to others during the holiday season by preparing for and then gathering in ways that maximize mask wearing, social distancing and hygiene efforts.

Overview of the number observations conducted by county/city enforcement officials. In addition to the goals outlined above, Humboldt County Business Educator Program officials will make observations at a minimum of 10 Humboldt County and City of Winnemucca businesses each week to ensure businesses are following required protocols to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. Businesses that are found to be out of compliance will be noticed and asked to submit a written plan for solution. Program officials will follow up with non-compliant businesses and organizations to ensure accepted solutions are in progress.

Overview of compliance rates during county/city observations. While Humboldt County and the City of Winnemucca have just recently re-instituted the Humboldt County Business Educator Program, in April and May, 100 percent of businesses complied with all suggested solutions to mitigate the spread of COVID-19.

Overview of the number of violations and enforcement actions taken by county officials. In July, Humboldt County Health Board officials advised attendees at a major rodeo event via loudspeaker, individual letter at each camping space, and the producer's website and social media sites, that the event would be shut down without immediate compliance with mask regulations. Compliance was observed in short order. This enforcement action provided a sound foundation for later events and the need for participants to observe precautionary measures.

County Action Plan

Humboldt County has developed the following action plan to combat the spread of COVID-19 with the overall goal of maintaining increased testing averages, dropping the virus's positivity rate to less than 8.0%, and decreasing the case rate to less than 200 in a 30-day period.

Overview. Since the inception of the COVID-19 Pandemic, Humboldt County has taken appropriate measures and actions to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and to address cases within the community. The creation of the Humboldt County Health Board and the Fast Team contact tracers are testaments to these efforts. As a result, the county has seen measurable success in reducing the number of persons who have had close contact with infectious persons, in securing voluntary compliance with home quarantines, and in engaging businesses and patrons to take necessary precautionary measures. Currently, six Humboldt County residents are hospitalized for COVID-19, including five locally.

Proposed Plan. In order to continue these successful efforts as well as to mitigate the latest surge in cases, Humboldt County will:

- Continue the efforts of the Humboldt County Health Board, a multi-disciplinary team comprised of medical, emergency management, and government leaders. The board will continue to successfully manage local COVID-19 cases and assess resources needed within the county.
- Improve testing turn-around times. Tuesday, November 17, Humboldt County began sending samples to Quest, a private lab. Tests will now be turned around in 48-72 hours, which will positively impact local contact tracing efforts.
- Continue to explore ways to offer COVID testing free of charge as residents in Humboldt County may be choosing not to be tested due to cost and loss-of-work concerns. Humboldt General Hospital is currently planning to offer free testing for persons without insurance using CARES Act funding. Other options also may be available.
- Continue local contact tracing efforts through the Fast Team. The team has added six more members to ensure the county is fully prepared to deal with any continued surges and to limit the number of “close contacts.”
- Reinstate the Humboldt County Business Educator Program, whose officials will oversee business/organizational compliance efforts in Humboldt County and the City of Winnemucca.
- Plan and execute a second mass-testing event in Humboldt County for both symptomatic and asymptomatic people. Humboldt County has made a resource request to the Nevada Department of Emergency Management.
- Complete a draft vaccination plan with the goal of moving forward with Tier 1 COVID-19 vaccinations in Humboldt County. Humboldt County Emergency Management is actively working with the State of Nevada and the Community Health Nurse to facilitate the delivery of the vaccine, and with Tier 1 qualified employers to identify the number of persons to be vaccinated. Tentatively, there are 730 Tier 1 qualified persons in Humboldt County.
- Continue testing for virus RNA through the City of Winnemucca’s wastewater tracking program to early identify any emerging COVID-19 hot spots, and to then notify residents in the areas of highest concentration to remain alert for COVID-like symptoms.
- Launch a focused public relations campaign aimed at small gatherings. The campaign will focus on the idea of “gifting” health and protection to others during the holiday season by preparing for and then gathering in ways that maximize mask wearing, social distancing and hygiene efforts.
- Continue to maintain a close working relationship with the Humboldt County School District to help identify and mitigate the spread of the virus in the county’s schools. The Humboldt County Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent have both recently joined the Fast Team to further good communication.
- Continue outreach and strong communication with the Fort McDermitt Indian Reservation with regard to testing, case numbers, hospitalizations and deaths.
- Continue current communication efforts, including the daily Humboldt County Report, public notification of new cases, outreach via social and traditional media and more.
- Increase public education and communication outreach regarding the need to be tested, and highly publicize testing locations.

- Continue education about wearing masks, social distancing, washing hands frequently, and limiting travel and gatherings. Outreach also will continue to encourage residents to get flu-vaccinated.