

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 12/31/20**

## **RAVALLI COUNTY COVID-19 PUBLIC HEALTH UPDATE**

As we bring 2020 to a close in the coming days, we will all likely be excited to have the year behind us. This year, and the various challenges and hardships that have come along with COVID-19, have affected our communities in ways that we could have never imagined.

We also have hope for the new year in the exciting news of the recently approved COVID-19 vaccines. Scientists, researchers, and medical professionals around the globe have worked tirelessly over the past few months in developing and bringing these vaccines for FDA approval. The beginning of vaccine distribution in the United States has potentially marked a turning point in the efforts to overcome this pandemic.

2021 will also bring a change in administration for the State of Montana as well as the Presidency of the United States. We all wish Governor-Elect Gianforte and President-Elect Biden the best as they assume these important offices in our government; both have identified continuing to address the COVID-19 pandemic in Montana and the United States as priorities of their new administrations.

The changes in administration may potentially bring changes in public health directives, restrictions, or guidance. Despite any of these changes that may come, we continue to strongly encourage our community to observe the following Public Health guidelines to reduce the spread of communicable disease:

- Wear a face covering in public areas
- Keep your cohort circle small
- Frequently wash your hands and use hand sanitizer when washing is not available
- Stay home if you are sick

Local businesses, offices, and restaurants may continue to require particular health-related guidelines for customers who enter their establishments. As always, we ask residents and visitors to our valley to be courteous and respectful to our businesses and to each other.

Finally, we would like to thank the residents of Ravalli County for their continued diligence throughout the last year, and we acknowledge the many sacrifices you all have made to support the health and safety of our community. We are optimistic about what 2021 will bring and wish you all a Happy New Year!