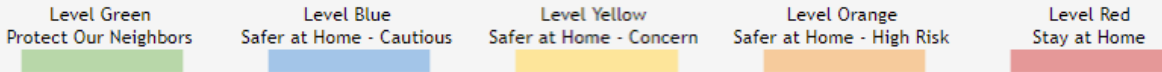


### Overall County Status

Click a County to View Corresponding Dial & Metrics

County data may be slightly different than state data due to data reporting timelines and outbreak exclusions



CO Covid 19 - Dashboard [Click here to see the status of your county](#)

## Only YOU can Prevent the Spread

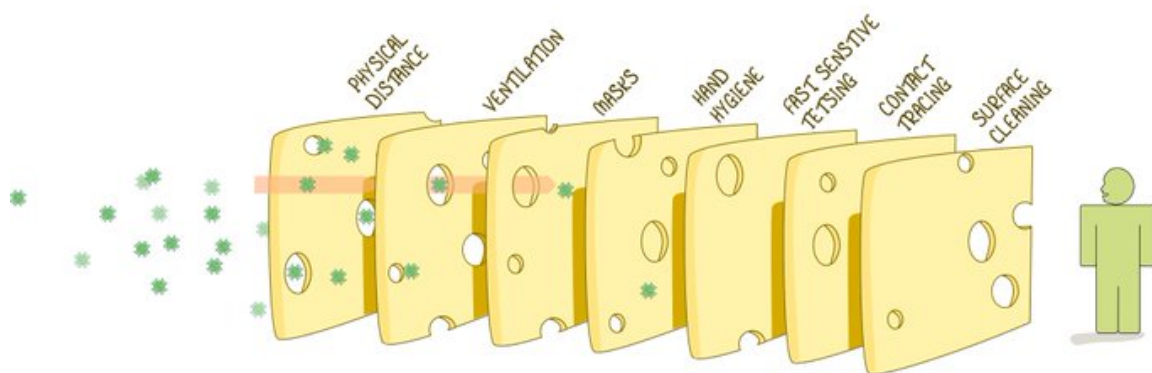
By Jon Stavney

[jstavney@nwccog.org](mailto:jstavney@nwccog.org)

This may be time to pull the plug on your holiday plans. The perception among many is that “small” social gatherings are probably safe. This is exactly opposite of the truth. It is possible that an afternoon with close friends and relatives is less safe than your workplace, less safe than the grocery store or any school. In these circumstances we have a built-in layer of virus defense that we don’t always use in social situations. This may be counter-intuitive but it is exactly what health officials are learning from tracking the data. [VOX is reporting](#) *How to have a safer—but not safe—pandemic Thanksgiving* stating, “even a family gathering requires something of a biohazard assessment plan.” Their use of a standard epidemiologist risk swiss cheese chart is instructive.

### THE SWISS CHEESE RESPIRATORY VIRUS DEFENCE

RECOGNISING THAT NO SINGLE INTERVENTION IS PERFECT



EACH INTERVENTION (LAYER) HAS FAILINGS (HOLES).  
MULTIPLE LAYERS REDUCE THEIR IMPACT.

Jan O'Hare  
VIRIOLOGYDOWNUNDER.COM  
DERIVED FROM @SHETCHPLANNER  
VERSION 1.0  
UPDATE: 11OCT2020

The bottom line is that each of us can change the direction of this, but perhaps, not in the situations we think. Cumulatively, we have already changed the trajectory of the virus in both directions through our individual behaviors. The charts shown below reveal examples of how our individual behaviors directly impact the number of increased and decreased COVID-19 cases. Each spike illustrates moments in time when we had collectively relaxed our behaviors which cumulatively changed the trajectory of the virus. It is no coincidence each of the spikes has followed a holiday. Now we are on a mega-spike HEADED INTO A HOLIDAY.

**Example #1:** After pulling together and taking COVID seriously by practically stopping all business and activity in March/April, **we-the-people** flattened the curve of incidences per hundred thousand down from

500 per 100,000. We binge shopped, shifted to remote work, hunkered down, masked up and accurately perceived the contagion as an active threat. Officials developed the [Five Commitments](#), and these simple personal protocols worked. Hey, it was mud season, and the end of the school year, and we were all a little freaked out.

**Example #2:** Then summer came and we let down our guard over the July 4<sup>th</sup> holiday. We travelled more, saw friends, maybe didn't mask up so actively, and collectively, we paid for it in increased cases and hospitalizations.

**Example #3:** Following the July 4<sup>th</sup> summer holiday **we-the-people** flattened a lesser curve (though it took longer) without having to restrict business as much. I say **we-the-people** because public health orders alone don't change anything—individual behaviors, and accommodations by businesses and institutions change things. Public health protocols became more ingrained and we actually were able to have an acceptable summer tourist season. We kept our economy moving by threading a needle between capacity and social distancing. Folks, that was a big deal. Well done. The result of this flattening period was that to end the summer, we started the school year and put kids back in classrooms for much of the semester. We politicked, protested, held an election, and moved on with our lives and we did so with a rather minimal set of restrictions (compared to March-April). We started to feel like we knew how to do this contagion containment thing, and things were going to be OK.

**Example #4: Halloween, when we-the-people let down our guard**, especially in personal social gatherings, to be with our friends, relations and families, and those tracing cases say is the cause of the surge. It is not because of business that can enforce standards of operation: lodging, retail or restaurants, and notably, not because of management of the school day; we have normalized complex distancing and risk-containment protocols in these social institutions, but **we-the-people** in the situations in which we have the most control, often in our own homes, are letting down our guard and it is putting our entire economy at risk.

These three charts below graphically depict the consequences of our behaviors.

The first chart is a snapshot in time from late September showing the result of concerted efforts to keep each other and ourselves safe. When we took our eye off the ball, we spiked the number of cases -- Memorial Day, 4th of July, Labor day.

The next chart depicts our ability to bring the instances down, but on this snapshot-in-time, October 18th, you can see the results of Labor Day and kids going back to school along with the general fatigue of Covid-19 setting in. We started to let our guards seriously slip.

The final chart dated November 3, shows the culmination of back-to-school, Halloween parties, etc. We are now entering the longest most active holiday season and it should be noted we are beginning this phase in the winter, during Thanksgiving and Christmas when people are more likely to stay indoors, and invite family and friends over to celebrate -- at the top of a crest -- which will likely increase.

### State-Wide Incidence



State-Wide Incidence as of 9-22-2020 - Note the difference in the "y" axis

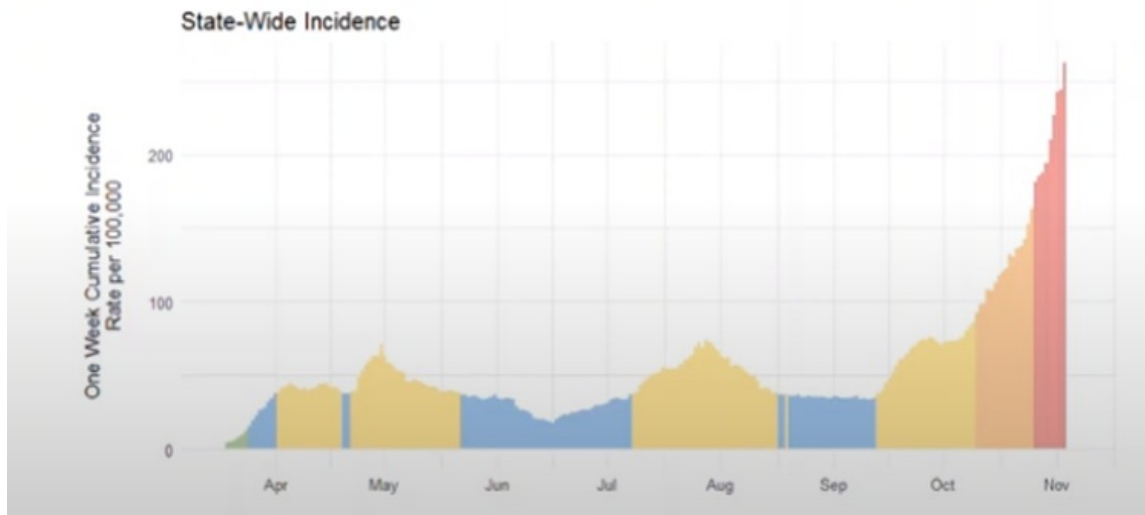
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### State-Wide Incidence



State-Wide Incidence as of 10-18-2020 **Note the change in y axis**

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State-Wide Incidence as of 11-3-2020 -Note the change in y axis

Social gatherings take on many different situations; in [Steamboat Springs a “superspreader” Halloween party](#) put hundreds of high school students in quarantine and has spurred a debate over whether enforcement needs to shift from educating citizens to fines. Hospital capacity for COVID across the Colorado “Hospital Ecosystem” as Will Cook, CEO of Vail Health notes, is nearing capacity. This matters locally because when hospitals across the state exceed their capacity to manage the worst cases, a variety of risk factors skyrocket for all of us, whether we contract the virus or not.

Confirmed cases that require hospitalization are above what they were at the March peak across Colorado. In some counties, positivity rates of tests have leapt from 3-4% for most of the past months to 12-50% in November (for those who get tested) depending on site sample. Yeah, so in some places, among those seeking testing, almost half are infectious.

### The Abstract Color Chart

With a 14-day cycle of infection, our window on controlling the virus locally, statewide and nationwide is closing—those other institutions that we rely upon to fuel our economy, and our own freedom to choose may have us wishing we could land on the MONOPOLY square that says, GO BACK TO MARCH 15<sup>th</sup>.

The state has adopted a uniform matrix of stages of risk. In the past two weeks, the majority of counties in the state have moved from normal cruising RPM of Blue or Green. As October turns to November, most of our Counties are veering like a car on ice towards the [Orange Phase](#) (Safer at Home) on the State [Dashboard](#), which is one notch below Red— (Stay at Home). As the snow begins, putting out the fall wildfire season, hopes are high for visitors to come and keep us in business. Now, the possibility of a healthy economy this winter, avoiding stay at home orders depends almost entirely on the choices we-the-people, that is you and I, make about socializing for the next 8 weeks until we can get to January.

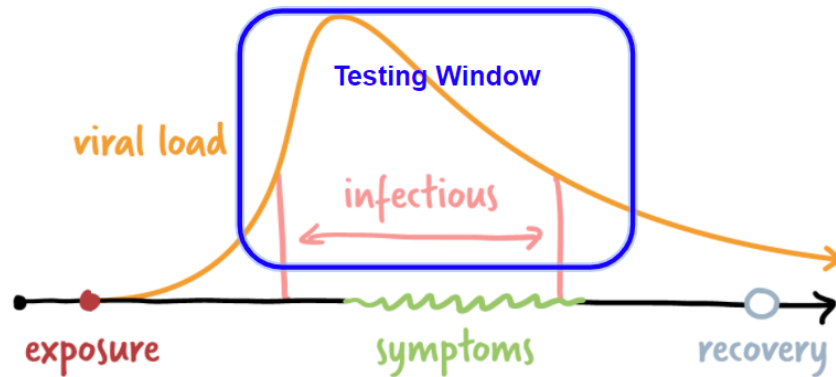
The problem with the graphs and the dashboards is that, while standardizing the metrics and illustrating the stages very well, they really just reflect an accumulation of behaviors. We don't link the charts to our own personal responsibility very well.

### Testing

On Thursday, November 12, Summit County sent out an emergency alert: *COVID-19 is circulating at alarming levels in Summit County, and substantial asymptomatic spread is occurring. Public Health urges all residents to get tested at a free testing site, especially if you have symptoms of illness...*

As testing capacity increases, there are some factors to keep in mind.

## EPI 101-You can be infectious before symptoms develop



I'll do my best to summarize: If a person is "exposed" to the virus (starting on day one on left side of the 14 day chart), they may be asked to quarantine. If they don't show symptoms, they should wait up to 7 days from the exposure to get tested. If they have symptoms at any point, they should get tested within 24 hours. If tested in the few days before entering the blue infection window (especially if not showing symptoms) those tests are unlikely to be positive (even if the patient is carrying the virus) because the test they are using only show positive during the roughly 7 day window of being at peak infectiousness. After 7 days from exposure if no symptoms occur the chances of carrying the virus diminish, but officials note that patients have shown symptoms suddenly at the end of the 14-day window.

The [Vail Daily](#) reports that Vail health is working to increase testing capacity. Its important for all communities that testing be done wisely. Chris Lindley, Vail Health notes "We want to test all those people, no problem. But we want to discourage folks from getting tested just because they want to know. That's not a good use of our resources and we want to save it for folks who need it most."

### **Vaccine: set realistic expectations about this**

This past week, Americans got some very welcome news that Pfizer appears to have a viable vaccine. Local officials noted that the announcement that up to 20 million doses may be available in January put that in perspective. It takes two doses to be effective, so cut that number in half. In a particular county the number of doses that translates to locally is between 300 and 400. Those would need to be prioritized. The Colorado Sun is reporting [It could take up to a year before every Coloradan who wants a coronavirus vaccine can get one](#)—so set expectations accordingly. The article also has a chart of Colorado's "Phased Approach to Distribution" which, as one would expect, prioritizes the most at-risk front line healthcare workers and EMS, then highest risk individuals, then those over 65 with "the general public" which is most of us in a third phase.

There was a second vaccine announced this week. This is also good news. None of these will be ready to get us through the holiday season, and it is unlikely many of us will get prioritized until Mud-Season 2021 or later, so until then, study that swiss cheese graphic and treat any social gathering less casually and more like the biohazard that it is.

**Next Council Meeting:**

**December 3, 2020 - 10:00 to 12:00**

*Full Council, EED Board & Foundation Board Meeting*

Zoom Call

*Agenda: 2020 Budget Revisions, approve 2021 budget, annual NWCCOG Foundation meeting*