For immediate release
March 16, 2020
Contact: Drenda Niemann, Health Officer, 406-457-8910
Gayle Shirley, Communications Manager, 406-439-4503, 406-457-8900

Health Officer Orders Temporary Closure of Some Businesses

The Lewis and Clark Public Health Officer issued an order Monday afternoon closing most food, drink, and fitness establishments in Lewis and Clark County, beginning at 6 a.m. Tuesday, March 17.

The order specifically applies to bars, breweries, distilleries, casinos, restaurants, fitness centers, athletic centers, gyms, and workout studios. It exempts food establishments that provide drive-through, delivery, or pick-up services. Sit-down dining is prohibited.

The order was approved unanimously by the City-County Board of Health, which governs the public health department. It will remain in effect until March 23 at 8 a.m. pending further notice.

“The Board of Health, through the health department, has the legal duty to protect the public from the introduction and spread of communicable disease,” said Drenda Niemann, health officer. “We don’t make this decision lightly. We believe it’s a vital step in stopping the spread of COVID-19.”

Numerous other communities across the state and nation have adopted similar strategies to prevent spread of the virus that causes COVID-19. The businesses affected by the order were selected because they encourage people to congregate, which increases the risk of disease spread.