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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 27, 2020

### **Cowley County Public Health Officer Issues Order on COVID-19**

In response to the void created by the veto of HB 2054 by the Governor on May 26, 2020, Cowley County Public Health Officer, Thomas Langer has issued a local public health order specific to COVID-19. The local order became effective today at 12:00 am. It basically adopts the current framework of the Ad Astra Plan to Reopen Kansas as guidance but allows for the guidance to be amended locally to fit local needs of the county so long as the public health indicators connected to COVID-19 remain stable or in decline.

The plan essentially holds in place everything COVID-19 related as it currently exists in Cowley County. The reason for this is to allow the special session of the Kansas Legislature to convene on June 3, 2020 and take up the matters that are currently unresolved including emergency management provisions and extension of statewide disaster declarations. If those matters are resolved with no further impact to local public health guidance, then the review of the current phase of reopening and the consideration of moving ahead will commence.

“It makes little sense to keep our county restricted unnecessarily yet we must remain deliberate and not just abandon all the precautions that have been working in Cowley County” said Langer. “The pandemic response plan that exists for our county provides for the activation of a working group that will consist of members of local government, emergency management, business and public health to consider changes moving forward” continued Langer “we will continue to rely upon the health science available to us from the State Health Department and the CDC and we will incorporate our local public health conditions to make the best and most prudent decisions to protect our health as we expand our social and business interactions.”

The hope is that we can move a bit quicker toward full activity but not at the risk of community health and safety. We do not want a “wild west” scenario in our county where everyone just does their own thing and that invites visitors from outside of our county that could cause a new spread of the virus.

A copy of the executed Public Health Order will be placed upon the Health Department website for public review. The order includes guidance to individuals and employers/businesses.

This is just the latest turn of events in what has been an ever-changing pandemic response. “We will not quickly make changes locally only to have them undone next week. Hopefully we can proceed in Cowley County in a sound and reasonable manner.”

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