



**SEVENTEENTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT, STATE OF COLORADO
ADAMS AND BROOMFIELD COUNTIES**

**FOURTH ADDENDUM TO NINTH AMENDED ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER
REGARDING COURT OPERATIONS UNDER COVID-19 EFFECTIVE NOVEMBER
23, 2020 UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE AND ORDER**

Issued February 24, 2021

ADDENDUM to 2020-01 A9

Over the last 11 months, the Courts have been responding to the public health risks posed by COVID-19 (“novel coronavirus”) and the advisories and information circulated by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE), and the Tri-County Health Department (TCHD), recommending active steps to slow the spread of the disease and precautions to reduce the risk of exposure to the staff and the public coming to the courthouse, including jurors.

On January 26th, 2021, this Court extended the start date for trials to March 1, 2021. The Court hoped that we could start to safely hold trials on that date. However, the Court and additional 17th JD leaders have had two meetings over the last week to discuss the possible extension of the trial start date. Other stakeholders in the justice system asked that the trial start date be pushed back a month.

Although we have a large back log of trials, COVID 19 remains a serious health risk to the residents of Adams County. Our infection rate is still over 5%. In addition, there are now cases involving the mutated virus (with a higher infection rate) in Colorado and the community vaccination rates have been lower than originally projected. Since the last extension, the Court Staff has been in contact with Tri-County Health Department attempting to get Courthouse, Public Defender and District Attorney staff vaccinated before the March 1st start date. Other justice system stakeholders were also trying to get access to vaccines. We were

unsuccessful in those attempts until February 19, 2021. Late on the 19th, we heard from Tri-County that we will be able to start vaccinations for Court, DA and Public Defender personnel around March 8, 2021.

Given the current status of COVID infections in Adams County as stated above, and the inability to address those circumstances with vaccinations prior to March 8th, the Court is Ordering one final deferment of trials until March 29, 2021. The Court finds that this four week delay is necessary to limit the exposure to COVID for both the personnel required to conduct trials and the potential jurors that would need to serve. The Court finds that there is a substantial likelihood that by March 29th court personnel will have received their second shot and jurors in the defined higher risk groups will have received their vaccinations. That will put court personnel and summoned jurors in a much safer posture to participate in trials than they are today.

The Court is also giving notice that one of the felony trials scheduled to start on March 29th, will have jury selection on Friday, March 26, 2021. That will avoid the health risks related to two felony jury venires coming into the courthouse at the same time. The Court finds that the jury election on March 26th can be done within acceptable safety guidelines since it will be 18 days after the first staff vaccinations.



Don Quick
Chief Judge, 17th J.D.