



February 1, 2021

To Missoula City-County Health Department

Cc: Missoula County Commissioners  
Missoula City Council  
Mayor John Engen

The Missoula Area Chamber of Commerce is writing to encourage the Missoula City-County Health Department to take a more collaborative approach to Covid-19 restrictions in relation to club sports in Missoula. Specifically, we write in support of the Missoula Jr. Bruins hockey team. The Jr. Bruins organization has seen substantial financial impacts due to its inability to host games on their home ice. In addition to the normal expenses of paying for ice time, the team is now forced to pay for buses to transport them to other communities to play their "home" games. This also means scheduling games when very few fans can attend, further impacting team revenue.

The Missoula Jr. Bruins have developed a plan to keep their games as safe as possible, including limiting the number of fans in attendance to allow for appropriate social distancing. The current limitation on the number of players allowed at ice level simply does not allow them to hold games. As the Health Board heard during their last meeting, this is frustrating for parents and players as they see fellow athletes allowed to participate in high school sports right here at home while they are forced to travel to other communities.

The Health Board recently passed updated regulations for local bars and restaurants, in part, to keep patrons from travelling to other communities with fewer regulations and potentially bringing Covid back to Missoula. The Jr. Bruins are asking for the same consideration. Rather than forcing them to leave Missoula, allow them to host their home games on their own ice. Allow their fans to stay here, support local businesses and avoid traveling to communities with less restrictive Covid protections.

The Missoula Chamber urges Health Department officials to work with the hockey club to find solutions that would allow them to host home games while keeping players and fans safe. Give these athletes the same opportunities high school sports athletes and their families have enjoyed. Doing so will also help ensure the financial burdens the team is facing are not overwhelming, preventing the team from organizing next season.

The Chamber hopes you will work with the Jr. Bruins organization and the local hockey community to find a way for home games to be played at Glacier Ice Rink. The ability to host home games benefits the Jr. Bruins organization, their fans, families and Missoula businesses. Home games should be played on home ice. We hope the Missoula City-County Health Department will support these young athletes and find a way to make that happen.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kim Latrielle".

Kim Latrielle  
CEO