IOWA COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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For Immediate Release

Iowa County Health Department
Director/Health Officer
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Case Count at 1,469;
Vigilance Needed with Upcoming Holidays; COVID-19 Vaccine Planning

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Iowa County - The Health Department confirms 38 cases were added over the weekend bringing the current COVID-19 confirmed case count in Iowa County to 1,469. Recent cases are in persons in the following age ranges: 0-17 (4), 18-25 (8), 26-35 (5), 36-45 (4), 46-55 (7), 56-65 (4), 66-75 (4) and 86+ (2). The number of individuals that have recovered is 1,277, meaning 192 active cases. Cases are in all age ranges and across the entire county. For a breakdown of the location of positive cases. See https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/county.htm. These maps show existing COVID-19 case and death data by municipalities (cities, towns, and villages), zip code tabulation areas, and school district boundaries.

"Now is the time to be persistent with following public health recommendations. Every act of prevention matters and will continue to be important as Christmas arrives", states Debbie Siegenthaler, Director, Iowa County Health Department. "We were very concerned about the impact of Thanksgiving-related gatherings on transmission. We are very encouraged to see that our data has not seen huge spikes we were concerned with. Even though the case numbers are not at the levels in prior weeks, case numbers are still at a very high level", noted Siegenthaler. "Our health care and public health workers continue to need the help of the community in slowing spread so that hospitals can continue to meet patient needs," Siegenthaler urged.

Case activity in Iowa County is in the very high activity category, along with our neighbor counties in south central Wisconsin. You can find the Disease Activity Dashboard at the Wisconsin DHS website. "What remains clear is that we must assume anytime we leave our home, we should anticipate we will come in contact with coronavirus", added Siegenthaler.

An important focus continues to be individuals at a high risk who we recommend remain home as much as possible. Factors that place you at higher risk include having an underlying health condition, including asthma, obesity, compromised immune system due to conditions like cancer, HIV or AIDS, and serious chronic illnesses like kidney, heart, lung or liver disease. In addition, older adults, over the age of 60, are at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19. If you are unsure if you are high risk, please reach out to your health care provider. See also https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/risks.htm

Continued recommendations:
- Limit indoor gatherings to 10 people or less
- Limit outdoor gatherings to 25 people or less
- Post-pone or cancel all non-essential events, gatherings and travel
- Wear a cloth face covering in public settings
- Stay at least 6 feet away from other people when you leave your home
- Wash your hands regularly for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.

COVID-19 Vaccine Planning

Covid-19 vaccination planning is underway in Iowa County. Healthcare workers and residents of long-term care facilities will be the first to receive the vaccine.

We understand that some people may be nervous or have questions about the COVID-19 vaccines – this is totally reasonable. Fortunately, researchers have been working on vaccines for the coronavirus family for years, so they did not need to start from scratch.

Vaccine approval is driven by science. The FDA, CDC, and independent advisors review all vaccine safety and effectiveness data before any vaccine is approved or allowed for distribution. COVID-19 vaccines are going through all the same steps in the trial phases that all vaccines go through to get the full FDA vaccine license and approval. As researchers have been working intensely to develop and test the vaccine, they have been transparent in sharing data, holding live hearings, and pausing trials when it's been important to slow down. Like with all vaccines, after a COVID-19 vaccine is made available to the public, the FDA and CDC will continue to closely monitor the vaccine to help ensure any issues are immediately addressed. Visit CDC's website for more information about the safety of COVID-19 vaccines https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/safety.html

All of this has given us trust and confidence in vaccination – a critical tool in slowing the spread of COVID-19 and healing our communities move forward.

"We have sacrificed so much in 2020 to keep our loved ones and community safe. While we know getting vaccinated isn't always comfortable, you can play a big role to support Iowa County by keeping yourself and your family up-to-date on immunizations – including the seasonal flu shot and the COVID-19 vaccine once it is available. By staying updated on immunizations, we can make sure our sacrifice and efforts to fight COVID-19 keep everyone safe", Siegenthaler stated.

> ### *COVID-19 Vaccine Resources*
> DHS COVID-19 Vaccine page
> Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, COVID-19 Vaccine Q&A
> CDC COVID-19 Vaccine page
> CDC: Facts about COVID-19 Vaccines
> SDMAC: 11/24/2020 Meeting Information

Local Community testing for the remainder of December:

- *Iowa County*: Thursday, December 17 from 11:00 – 1:00 at the Health and Human Services Center located at 303 West Chapel Street in Dodgeville.
- *Lafayette County*: Wednesday, December 23 from 11:00 am – 1:00pm at the Ames Road Multipurpose Building at 11974 Ames Road in Darlington
- *Iowa County*: Wednesday, December 30 from 11:00 – 1:00 at the Health and Human Services Center located at 303 West Chapel Street in Dodgeville.

Testing is free and open to anyone (age 5+) who feels they have a need to be tested. Minors must be accompanied by a parent or guardian with consent. Appointments are not required, but it is requested that those who wish to be tested pre-register at https://register.covidconnect.wi.gov.

People should consider visiting the testing site if:
   * They have had close contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19.
   * They have COVID-19 symptoms

    * They have regular exposure to a large number of people (i.e., people who work in grocery stores)
    * They work closely with high-risk populations (i.e., healthcare workers, people who work with people who are incarcerated, people who work in long-term care facilities)

There are additional testing sites in southwest Wisconsin in Grant, Lafayette and Richland counties. Visit the Iowa County COVID-19 website and/or follow our Facebook page for a list of weekly testing opportunities in southwest Wisconsin.

Upland Hills Hospital continues to provide COVID testing. Please see the Upland Hills website for information on getting tested at their facility.

Important Sources of Information

- **Wisconsin Department of Health Services** https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/index.htm
    - Holiday Safety https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/community.htm#-holidays
- **Iowa County website**. https://www.iowacounty.org/departments/COVID-19
- **Upland Hills Health** https://www.uplandhillshealth.org/patient-visitors/covid-19/
- **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention** https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html
- **211 Wisconsin** Simply call 211 from your phone https://211wisconsin.communityos.org/

Social Media sites:

Iowa County Public Health on Facebook - https://www.facebook.com/iowacountyhealthdepartment/
Upland Hills Health on Facebook - https://www.facebook.com/UplandHillsHealthHospital/
Iowa County Emergency Management on Twitter - https://twitter.com/ICEMWI
Iowa County Emergency Management on Facebook - https://www.facebook.com/icemwi/

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