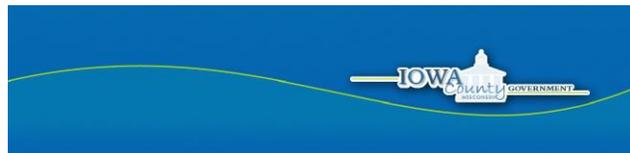


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For Immediate Release

Iowa County Health Department

Director/Health Officer

Debbie Siegenthaler RN, MSN

COVID-19 Cases Continue to Increase in Iowa County, Case Count at 457

Iowa County – The Health Department confirms over the weekend we added 41 additional cases bringing the current COVID-19 confirmed case count in Iowa County to 457. Cases are in all age ranges and across the entire county. These recent cases are in persons in the following age ranges: 0-17 (6), 18-25 (3), 26-35 (3), 36-45 (5), 46-55 (5), 56-65 (5), 66-75 (5), 76-85 (2) and 86+ (7). The number of individuals that have recovered is 331, meaning 126 cases are active. Iowa County status remains classified as VERY HIGH activity.

Due to the continued high volume of cases, the Health Department continues to experience delays in the time frame in which we are able to reach out to close contacts. If you are awaiting a test result, please be sure to remain quarantined. If you test positive, please isolate yourself and let your close contacts know to self-quarantine and consider being tested.

In addition, Wisconsin continues to experience increases in hospital admissions and staffing concerns. In Iowa County, our local hospital is closely monitoring their facility and staffing capacity as well as the capacity surrounding hospitals. Regional hospital capacity and staffing status are monitoring on the DHS website <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/disease.htm>. This data dashboard details disease activity and related hospital capacity level. Our region is experiencing hospital bed usage at 81% and ICU bed usage at 79%.

Staying safe this Halloween

Each year many children look forward to the tradition of going door to door trick-or-treating on Halloween. This year, the recommendation is to avoid that activity and consider other ways to celebrate.

"The traditional Halloween celebration of trick-or-treating and going door to door unfortunately carries risk of transmission of COVID-19, states Debbie Siegenthaler, Director, Iowa County Health Department. "This year, we are discouraging participation in any activity that significantly increases your risk of transmission or exposure to the infection due to the difficulty it presents in maintaining physical distancing," says Siegenthaler. "It also involves the exchange of objects or candy which can also contribute to transmission of infection."

Indoor Halloween parties also are not recommended because of the high risk of exposure or infection. These recommendations don't mean you have to cancel Halloween.

There are low-risk options to consider:

- Carve pumpkins with members of your household.
- Decorate your house, apartment or living space.
- Have a virtual Halloween costume contest.

- Have a Halloween movie night with your household members.
- Have a scavenger hunt-style trick-or-treat search with your household members in or around your home rather than going door to door.

"This holiday season is going to be challenging and like no other we have had before. We're still in the midst of this pandemic and are seeing rates of infection at their highest levels so far here in Iowa County and the state of Wisconsin," added Siegenthaler.

Community Testing

The Health Departments of Iowa and Lafayette County have collaborated to provide a Covid-19 Community test site in our counties. Iowa County hosts a community test site at the Health and Human Services Center located at 303 West Chapel Street in Dodgeville. The Lafayette County Test site is at the Lafayette County Ames Road Multipurpose Building at 11974 Ames Road in Darlington. We ask that people go to COVIDconnect.com and register to be tested at one of these sites.

The next scheduled community testing will be in Lafayette County on Tuesday, October 27 from 10:00 am – Noon.

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>.

The schedule of additional testing days in each county are pending and will be announced later this week.

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)

Upland Hills Hospital will continue to provide COVID testing as they have since the pandemic began. Please see the Upland Hills website for information on getting tested at their facility.

You Stop the Spread: All of us can help protect the people, places, and experiences that matter most. Please take these simple steps to stop the spread of COVID-19:

- Wear a cloth face covering in public settings, especially when it is difficult to practice physical distancing.
- Stay at least 6 feet away from other people when possible 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.
- Stay at home as much as possible and especially if you are sick. Cancel events and avoid groups, gatherings, play dates, and nonessential appointments.

Important Sources of Information

- Wisconsin Statewide and Regional metrics [DHS website](#)
 - WI Department of Health Services (DHS) <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/outbreaks/index.htm>

- Regional metrics <https://publichealthmdc.com/coronavirus/data#metrics>
- Activity risk level <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/local.htm>
- County-specific data <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/cases-map.htm>
- Decision Tool for Individuals and Families <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/decision.htm>
- **Halloween Safety:**
 - DHS: [Celebrating Halloween Safely One-Pager](#)
 - de Beaumont's [Safety Tips for Halloween 2020](#)
- **Resources on the Iowa County website.**
<https://www.iowacounty.org/departments/COVID-19>
 - COVID 19 Dashboard
 - School Resources and Capacity Indicators
 - Local Data graphs
 - Daily Iowa County Case Count (updated Monday-Friday)
 - New cases are reflected on the Iowa County Health Dept Facebook page each day (Monday thru Friday). The WI DHS website updates each afternoon with county numbers. We update case numbers that occur over the weekend on Monday's Case Count. Positive cases will continue to be reported to the state and followed up on as they have been.
- Upland Hills Health <https://www.uplandhillshealth.org/patient-visitors/covid-19/>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
 - **Frequently Asked Questions:** CDC <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html>
- **211 Wisconsin** is an easy and helpful resource for COVID 19 questions. 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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