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For Immediate Release

Iowa County Health Department

Director/Health Officer

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Cases Continue to Increase Significantly, Count at 916; Dashboard Update

Iowa County - The Health Department reports an increase of 231 cases this past week bringing the total of cases to 916. During the previous week, 164 cases were reported, the week prior the weekly case increase was 105 cases and the week prior to that, 65 cases. Cases are in all age ranges and across the entire county. See <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/county.htm> for a breakdown of the location of positive cases by census track. The number of individuals that have recovered is 431, meaning 485 cases are active.

“We continue to experience a very, very high volume of cases each day. As you can see each week our cases just keep increasing at a very fast pace and are overwhelming our public health department.” stated Debbie Siegenthaler, Director, Iowa County Health Department. Iowa County also reported an additional death in Iowa County this week, bringing the total to four. The average case increase each day is now 26.36, up from a daily average of 16.86 at last dashboard report. The percent positive tests has increased to 14.5%, up from 11.37%. These metrics both remain at red status.

“The Health Department cannot keep up with cases increasing at this rate, added Siegenthaler. “We have implemented crisis standards for contact tracing protocol which means that our priority is to contact positive cases only. As a result, we are unable 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 for 14 days and consider being tested”, added Siegenthaler. For more information, please visit <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/publications/p02599.pdf>

We continue to be exceptionally concerned about hospital capacity, locally and regionally. Our local Dashboard includes local metrics for Upland Hills Health. Facility use status represents medical surge and Intensive Care Unit (ICU) capacity. This metric is currently red. Staffing status indicates the number of available staff to care for the volume of patients and remains red. Critical supply status reflects adequate levels of critical supplies. This metric is currently green.

Our regional health care infrastructure metric represents regional hospital bed use and is currently yellow, as 86% of regional hospital beds are in use. In addition, 86% of total regional ICU beds are in use. It is important to note that this metric simply reports bed capacity and doesn't measure staffing. There are concerns across the region as large numbers of hospital staff are sick or quarantined due to exposure to the virus. Regional hospital capacity can be found on the DHS website <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/disease.htm>

“Our health care and public health workers need the help of the community. We know everyone is tired of COVID-19. There is frustration, inconvenience and real impacts to lives... we get it. Pandemics are fair to no one, but the enemy is the virus. Right now, I implore the entire community to help in slowing spread so that hospitals

have the room and staff to care for those that need it. This response is about all of us working together for the good of the community. The lives of community members depends on unity.” Siegenthaler urged.

Iowa County status has increased to a CRITICALLY HIGH activity level. Late this week DHS added this “critically high” category to the confirmed case and COVID-like illnesses indicators. The “critically high” category distinguishes counties and regions that have case rates (or case burdens) of greater than 1,000 cases per 100,000 residents over the last 14 days. This is 10 times higher than the “high” category. Given the “very high” activity throughout the state, the introduction of a new categorization was warranted to draw attention – and alarm – as our state sees widespread surges of COVID-19. These enhancements to the [Disease Activity Dashboard](#) give Wisconsinites a better picture of the impact of COVID-19 in our state amidst a surge in activity.

Iowa County Dashboard Metrics

Epidemiology: Our percentage of positive cases continues to increase, now at 14.5%, this metric remains red. The average cases reported daily metric increased to 26.36, remaining in the red. The Outbreak metric remains red.

Healthcare Status: Testing rate remains green with an average of 181.8 tests performed daily. We encourage anyone with symptoms to contact his/her health care provider to be tested. Local health care partner’s facility use status (represents med surge and ICU capacity) has changed to red. Staffing status indicates the number of available staff to care for the volume of patients and is currently red. Critical supply status reflects at least fourteen days’ worth of supplies. This metric remains green. Our regional health care infrastructure metric represents regional hospital bed use and is currently yellow, as 86% of regional hospital beds are in use. In addition, 87% of total regional ICU beds are in use.

Public Health Status: Community spread remains in red, as 41% of cases are reporting no known source of transmission in the past two weeks. Our goal is that fewer than 20% of cases have no known source of transmission. This value is a reflection of current information, some data is missing, as not all cases have been in contact with the health department. Our contact tracing efforts dropped some, now at 89%. This metric is dependent on individuals either answering the phone or returning our calls, which remains an issue. Our health department volume and staffing metric remains red. We continue to see an increase in cases and have had to modify our outreach to close contacts.

Emergency Management: Our emergency management partners remain in green status; however, PPE demand has picked up and the supply chain is experiencing issues with gloves, gowns and N95 masks.

School Capacity Indicator Dashboard <https://www.iowacounty.org/COVID-19IowaCountySchoolGuidance>

This dashboard contains key dashboard metrics from our Iowa County COVID-19 Dashboard with the addition of the new case rate in the past two weeks. Today, the new case rate is 155 per 10,000, up again, very significantly from last Friday’s value of 99.3. The previous Friday value was 66.5.

<i>Date dashboard was updated</i>	<i>Percent of tests that are positive</i>	<i>Average number of cases reported per day</i>	<i>Average number of tests per day</i>	<i>Outbreaks metric</i>	<i>Percentage of cases contracted by community spread</i>
July 20	1.45%	.92	42.8	Red	46%
July 27	2.1%	.71	33.1	Red	30%
August 3	2.6%	1.0	37.7	Red	42%
August 10	3.9%	1.71	43.6	Red	38%
August 17	4.2%	2.5	60	Red	54%
August 24	3.8%	2.0	53	Red	46%
August 31	3.3%	1.5	45	Red	43%

September 8	2.0%	0.93	45.4	Red	38%
September 14	1.3%	0.64	49.7	Red	40%
September 21	2.6%	1.79	70	Red	64%
September 28	3.5%	3.79	107.5	Red	60%
October 5	4.8%	5.57	116.5	Red	51%
October 12	6.8%	8.21	121	Red	43%
October 19	7.5%	11.58	153.8	Red	41%
October 23*	7.9%	11.35	142.9	Red	43%
October 30	8.4%	11.29	133.7	Red	42%
November 6	11.37%	16.86	148.3	Red	42%
November 13	14.5%	26.36	181.8	Red	41%

*Shift in day of dashboard update due to data availability.

Monday, November 9, 2020, the Health Department recommended a shift back to phase 1 in its Mass Gathering recommendation. The Health Department is asking the Iowa County community to:

- Limit indoor gatherings to 10 people or less.
- Limit outdoor gatherings to 25 people or less.
- Post-poner or cancel all non-essential events, gatherings and travel
- 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 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.

With cases increasing so drastically, the Health Department also recommended Monday, that schools consider moving to virtual instruction for middle and high school students, and consider doing so for the entire district as operationally necessary. It was also recommended that schools postpone all contact sports. These measures are recommended to be in place until December 4, 2020 at which time we will evaluate local metrics.

Executive Order #94

On November 10, Governor Evers issued Executive Order #94, which lists new measures to stop the spread of COVID-19. This order advises Wisconsinites to stay home, use extra precautions if they have to leave their home, and adopt good public health practices. Businesses are also encouraged to take further steps to protect workers, customers, and the surrounding community. You can view Executive Order #94 at <https://evers.wi.gov/Documents/COVID19/EO094-COVIDRecommendations.pdf>

Community Testing in Iowa County:

- Thursday, November 19 from 11:00 – 1:00 at the Health and Human Services Center located at 303 West Chapel Street in Dodgeville.
- **Wisconsin National Guard** testing Friday, November 20 from 10:00-6:00pm 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)

Iowa County will be hosting an additional Wisconsin National Guard testing site at HHS in Dodgeville on December 4th. These Guard sites are in addition to the other WING test sites in Grant and Lafayette Counties throughout November and December. 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 Statewide and Regional metrics** [DHS website](#)
 - WI Department of Health Services <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>
 - Holiday Safety <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/community.htm#-holidays>
- **Resources on the Iowa County website.** <https://www.iowacounty.org/departments/COVID-19>
 - COVID 19 Dashboard (updated each Friday)
 - School Capacity Indicators (updated each Friday)
 - Daily Iowa County Case Count (updated Monday-Friday)
- **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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