

## IOWA COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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[www.iowacounty.org](http://www.iowacounty.org)

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*For Immediate Release*

**Iowa County Health Department**

*Director/Health Officer*

*Debbie Siegenthaler RN, MSN*

### Case Count at 1,542; COVID-19 Vaccine Planning; Dashboard Update

**Iowa County** – The Health Department reports an increase of 111 cases this past week bringing the total of cases to 1,542. During the previous week, 109 cases were reported, the week prior the increase was 57 cases and the week prior to that, 137 cases. The number of individuals that have recovered is 1,344, meaning 198 cases are active. 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.

This week's dashboard update saw the percentage of positive cases increase from 8.1% last week to 9.6%, having Iowa County remain at yellow status. The average cases reported daily metric increased to 14.4, an increase from an average of 11.9 last week, remaining in the red.

"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. "Even though the case numbers are not at the levels in prior weeks, metrics did tick up a bit this week over last and 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.

We are asking the Iowa County community to continue 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 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.

#### **COVID-19 Vaccine Planning**

Iowa County Health Department, Iowa County Emergency Management, Upland Hills Health, Long Term Care facilities and Public Safety agencies are meeting and planning related to Covid-19 vaccination. Agencies are working in a very collaborative manner to be ready to administer vaccine as soon as it arrives in Iowa County. This is an exciting next step in the pandemic response.

The FDA granted Emergency Use Authorization to the Pfizer vaccine on Friday, December 11, 2020. On Saturday, December 12, the experts on the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) voted to recommend the

use of this vaccine and the CDC accepted this recommendation. The Pfizer vaccine may be administered to people age 16 years of age and older for prevention of COVID-19.

Yesterday, a FDA Advisory panel recommend that the FDA authorize the Moderna vaccine for emergency use, as they did for the Pfizer vaccine. The FDA is expected to quickly authorize emergency use of the vaccine as well.

Monday, December 14<sup>th</sup>, the Pfizer vaccine began to arrive in Wisconsin. As recommended both by the ACIP Practices and the State Disaster Medical Advisory Committee (SDMAC), the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) is prioritizing hospitals and clinics as initial vaccination sites to reach front-line healthcare workers.

We do not have a definitive date for the arrival of vaccine in Iowa County. The Iowa County Health Department will likely not see vaccine until sometime in early January 2021. The local health care system and skilled nursing homes could get vaccine sooner.

Over the next weeks and months there will be many updates regarding the COVID-19 vaccine. It will take significant time for enough vaccine to be available for the general public. Experts on ACIP, SDMAC and DHS will continue to relay more information about the next tier of priority groups to be immunized.

The Iowa County Health Department is not keeping a list of persons who wish to receive the vaccine. Please keep up to date with the vaccine roll-out through press releases, the Iowa County COVID-19 website or the ICHD Facebook page.

We understand that some people may be nervous or have questions about the COVID-19 vaccines. 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 complete 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 a vaccine 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](#)

## Iowa County Dashboard Metrics

**Epidemiology:** Our percentage of positive cases increased, now at 9.6%, remaining yellow. The average cases reported daily metric increased to 14.4, remaining in the red. The Outbreak metric remains red.

**Healthcare Status:** Testing rate remains green with an average of 150 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 yellow. Staffing status indicates the number of available staff to care for the volume of patients and is currently yellow. 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 82.7% of regional hospital beds are in use, down slightly from last week. In addition, 84.4% of total regional ICU beds are in use, also down from last week.

**Public Health Status:** Community spread remains in red, as 46% 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 are at 94%. 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 yellow.

**Emergency Management:** Our emergency management partners remains green. PPE demand continues to be 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 metrics from our Iowa County COVID-19 Dashboard along with new case rate metric (per 10,000) in the past two weeks. Today, the new case rate is 85, a slight increase from 70 per 10,000 at last dashboard report but still below the prior week's value of 98.

<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>	<i>School Capacity metric: new case rate per 10,000</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%	9
September 8	2.0%	0.93	45.4	Red	38%	5
September 14	1.3%	0.64	49.7	Red	40%	4
September 21	2.6%	1.79	70	Red	64%	11
September 28	3.5%	3.79	107.5	Red	60%	22
October 5	4.8%	5.57	116.5	Red	51%	33
October 12	6.8%	8.21	121	Red	43%	49
October 19	7.5%	11.58	153.8	Red	41%	59
October 23*	7.9%	11.35	142.9	Red	43%	67
October 30	8.4%	11.29	133.7	Red	42%	67
November 6	11.4%	16.86	148.3	Red	42%	99
November 13	14.5%	26.36	181.8	Red	41%	155
November 20	14.7%	30.14	205.7	Red	43%	178
November 27	12.5%	26.86	215.1	Red	44%	158

<b>December 4</b>	9.8%	16.64	169.4	Red	43%	98
<b>December 11</b>	8.1%	11.9	147	Red	46%	70
<b>December 18</b>	9.6%	14.43	150	Red	46%	85

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

### School Recommendation

The Iowa County School Capacity Indicator Dashboard <https://www.iowacounty.org/COVID-19IowaCountySchoolGuidance> has 7 of its 10 metrics at either red or yellow status.

In consideration of a 14 day incubation period following Christmas, we recommend that schools consider virtual instruction for middle and high school students, and consider doing so for the entire district for two weeks following Christmas, which would have face-face instruction resume January 11, 2021.

### Local Community testing for the remainder of December:

- *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.

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### 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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