



Iowa County Health Department

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Iowa County Health Department

Director/Health Officer

Debbie Siegenthaler RN, MSN

Iowa County Health Department Shifting Focus in Pandemic Response Efforts

Iowa County – After nearly two years responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Iowa County Health Department will shift to prioritizing vaccination, community testing support and providing technical assistance to high-priority settings. This change comes after messaging from the Wisconsin Department of Health Services encouraging local health departments to focus on activities that are expected to yield the greatest benefit in terms of preventing severe COVID-19 disease. Additionally, a joint [national partner statement](#) from several national associations supports this shift. These associations include the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials, the National Association of County and City Health Officials, the Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists, the Association of Public Health Laboratories and the Big Cities Coalition.

The nature of the COVID-19 pandemic has shifted, as such, the response approach needs to also shift. The evolution of COVID-19 variants, widespread availability of vaccines, availability of at-home tests, the development of new epidemiology tools, such as genomic surveillance, and a growing role for COVID-19 therapeutics have given medicine and public health a broader set of tools to mitigate the burden of COVID-19 disease. The substantial amount of new COVID-19 cases being recorded due to the Omicron variant, as well as its shorter incubation period, reduces feasibility and utility of universal case investigation for all reported COVID-19 cases.

“Transmission is happening so rapidly that by the time our team is able to connect with those who have tested positive, everyone is already exposed or ill”, explained Debbie Siegenthaler, Director/Health Officer of the Iowa County Health Department. “Effective immediately, the Iowa County Health Department will shift away from conducting case investigation on every positive case. The Health Department will provide technical assistance, as needed, to high-priority environments to prevent severe disease and death in our most vulnerable populations, such as long-term care facilities. In addition, our team will continue to offer weekly vaccination and testing clinics as these are powerful tools at this stage in the pandemic”, added Siegenthaler.

“This shift is meant to empower individuals to act when they suspect COVID-19 infection. If you suspect you have COVID-19, seek testing, immediately isolate to prevent transmission to others and talk to your healthcare provider about medical treatment if you are at higher risk for severe outcomes. Individuals should also promptly notify any close contacts of their exposure. In addition, individuals should notify their employer and/or school, childcare center. Individuals should continue to follow isolation (when testing positive) and quarantine (when exposed) guidelines provided by DHS and the CDC”, Siegenthaler explained.

The Iowa County Health Department shifting away from universal contact tracing and case investigation, including in depth interviewing of all positive cases, does not take away the importance of isolating and quarantining. This is a crucial time to do the right thing and act responsibly. Honesty and commitment in the steps of isolating (if positive), quarantining (if exposed), notifying those you were around and notifying your employer, school or daycare remain critical. We must continue to use mitigation measures to move forward and prevent spread.

In addition, please be assured, if you test positive through a PCR test (through a lab), there will remain a mechanism to assure each positive test result is relayed to each positive case. Instructions and information on what to do if you test positive are available in many places, including the Iowa County COVID-19 website <https://www.iowacounty.org/LatestGuidanceforIsolationandQuarantine>. We want to assure residents that the Iowa County Health Department will remain a resource for anyone who is unable to access the internet, those seeking further guidance or answers to specific questions. As stated, the Iowa County Health Department will remain a resource for high risk settings.

Settings such as schools, nursing homes, businesses, and daycares, who have implemented COVID-19 mitigation and prevention protocols to decrease transmission and prevent outbreaks, are encouraged to continue these efforts to protect vulnerable students, employees or individuals. The Iowa County Health Department supports efforts that support safety and continued operations. Our department will continue to work with these organizations to provide guidance, and help control and mitigate outbreaks.

It is still incredibly important that individuals take actions that will help prevent the spread of COVID-19. Everyone 5 years of age and older should get vaccinated against COVID-19, and those 12 years of age and older should get a booster dose when they are eligible. Getting vaccinated and boosted are critical tools in preventing severe disease, hospitalization and death. To find a vaccine provider, visit vaccines.gov. Everyone over the age of 2 years old should wear a well-fitting mask in indoor public places.

Iowa County Health Department COVID-19 Vaccination Clinics

For more information and future clinics, check our website www.iowacounty.org and/or follow us on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/iowacountyhealthdepartment/>

FEBRUARY COVID-19 VACCINE CLINICS

MODERNA, J&J and PFIZER for age 12 and up

BOOSTERS available for anyone 12 or older who is 5 months out from initial series

2/3/2022, 2/10/2022, 2/17/2022, and 2/24/2022

1-4pm at the Health and Human Services Building in Dodgeville

Children must be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian OR have a note from parent AND be accompanied by a person over 18 years of age.

Please sign up through a sign-up genius link below:

[02.03.2022: 02.03.2022 Pfizer \(signupgenius.com\)](#)

[02.03.2022: 02.03.22 Johnson & Johnson \(signupgenius.com\)](#)

[02.03.2022: 02.03.2022 Moderna \(signupgenius.com\)](#)

PEDIATRIC Pfizer Vaccine Clinics (for ages 5-11):

2/10/2022, 3/3/2022, 3/24/2022

Call 608.930.9870 to schedule a pediatric Pfizer appointment.

Location: Health and Human Services Building in Dodgeville.

Community Testing

The Iowa County Health Department continues to offer drive through COVID PCR testing **Tuesdays & Thursdays** at the Iowa County HHS Building; 303 W. Chapel St, Dodgeville, from 9:00-11:00 AM. No appointment is necessary but **registration is required** at <https://register.covidconnect.wi.gov/en-US/>. Testing is free to anyone above the age of 1 year who is symptomatic or asymptomatic. Minors must be accompanied by a parent or guardian with consent. Masks are required.

If you need help registering, you can call the health department a day or two before you'd like to test.

Additional testing options locally found at <https://www.iowacounty.org/COVID-19CommunityTesting>

Check the Iowa County COVID-19 website for more information <https://www.iowacounty.org>

Follow us on social media sites for ongoing announcements.

Iowa County Public Health on Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/iowacountyhealthdepartment/>

Iowa County Emergency Management on Twitter - <https://twitter.com/ICEMWI>

Iowa County Emergency Management on Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/icemwi/>

Other important websites:

- Wisconsin Department of Health Services <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/index.htm>
- Upland Hills Health <https://www.uplandhillshealth.org/patient-visitors/covid-19/>
- CDC <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
- 211 Wisconsin Simply call 211 from your phone <https://211wisconsin.communityos.org/>
- DHS Vaccine Data <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/vaccine-data.htm#summary>
- DHS Case Data <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/county.htm>

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