



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Macon County Health Department
1221 E. Condit St • Decatur, IL 62521
(217) 423-6988 • www.maconcountyhealth.org

September 29, 2020

Dear Residents, Business Owners, Faith Leaders, and Officials,

In recent weeks, many areas of Illinois have seen increases in the COVID-19 positivity rate. As of September 24, 2020, the positivity rate in Macon County was 6.6%. It was announced Friday, September 25, 2020, that Macon County has now entered warning level.

Unfortunately, due to the region's positivity rate of 7.4%, the entire region is now at risk of additional enforced mitigation measures. The region's metrics and possible mitigation measures considered and implemented can be viewed at <https://www.dph.illinois.gov/regionmetrics?regionID=6>. Possible mitigation measures could include, but are not limited to: reduced indoor dining capacity and suspended bar service in bars and restaurants; additional limits on social gatherings and room capacity; remote work implementation for employers; and reduced indoor capacity in retail and recreational establishments.

The Macon County Health Department continues to do what we have been doing since the beginning stages of our response including, but not limited to: support, consultation, collaboration, education, contact tracing, working with Long Term Care Facilities and other congregate settings. Recently, we have significantly grown our contact tracing team to continue to respond to confirmed cases and close contacts as quickly as possible. Through community collaboration, local testing capacity has also increased significantly. We have partnered closely with congregate facilities, employers, faith organizations, and more to ensure effective infection control and precautionary measures are being implemented. The healthcare system in Macon County has continued to prepare, respond, and adjust to needs as they arise. However, this pandemic is not only affecting the healthcare system, but also the community as a whole. We need all community residents to do their part in every way possible to prevent the spread of illness.

The COVID-19 virus is still here, and we need your help! As community leaders, partners, parents, business owners, and people experiencing an unprecedented pandemic together, I ask that you be a role model and lead by example to show the rest of our community that we are all taking this seriously and doing everything we can to prevent illness. Please take the following actions and encourage your families, friends, colleagues, employees, members of faith-based organizations, sports teams, and more to do the same.

- Wear your face covering PROPERLY and at all appropriate times. It should be covering your mouth AND nose. Wash it frequently and adequately, remove it appropriately, and do not touch the outside of it.
- Social distance whenever possible. Masking is not a substitute for social distancing. Even if you are masked, please continue to social distance including when you are with people you know.
- Wash your hands frequently and adequately.
- Clean and disinfect frequently-touched surfaces adequately.
- Stay home if you are sick. If you are tested, stay home while waiting for results. If you receive a positive test or find out that you are a close contact, do not wait for the health department to contact you. Immediately begin isolating or quarantining as appropriate.
- Implement screening processes to prevent symptomatic individuals from entering workplaces, faith-based organizations, events and spreading illness to others.

- Participate in contact tracing if you are contacted by the health department. Save our phone number in your phone (217-423-6988) for calls coming directly from our building. Please note that calls made with our statewide contact tracing program do show as an out of area code number.
- Adhere to isolation or quarantine guidance when you receive it. You *cannot* test out of quarantine.
- Do not hold or attend large gatherings.
- Follow all public health guidelines so that we can stay in Phase 4. It appears that our region will be experiencing mitigation measures from the state very soon. The faster we all take action, the greater chance we can prevent this next step or get back into Phase 4 as quickly as possible.

We all want to go back to the life we knew pre-COVID, but we have further to go. Don't give up now, there is too much at stake health-wise and socio-economically. Even if you and your family have not personally been impacted by COVID-19, many people have. Please take this seriously if not for yourself than for those around you. So far, 46 people with COVID-19 in Macon County have lost their lives. These are people with families, friends, jobs, retirement plans, hobbies, and more and we all need to do everything we can to prevent more people from losing their lives in this horrible pandemic.

Recently, IDPH released a statement indicating the need for further testing, which we support.

"In the face of increasing infections, we need to promote more testing, not less, to identify new cases and interrupt further transmission," said Illinois Department of Public Health Director Dr. Ngozi Ezike. "Given that asymptomatic individuals have been linked to virus spread, we will maintain our more stringent guidance to support testing of any Illinois resident who thinks they may have been exposed, as well as asymptomatic close contacts of confirmed cases 5-7 days post exposure."

This letter is an appeal to all of you to do your part in curbing the transmission of COVID-19. We all want to get back to our normal lives, but there is still too much at risk. This is a time to think of others. You may be healthy, but many others are at risk due to compromised immune systems and other health conditions. **It's all about WE, not ME** – Your actions *will* make a difference! Please do your part to reduce the transmission of COVID-19.

If you see an establishment not complying with the requirements, feel free to call 217-423-6988 ext: 1134 or submit a complaint in writing via livewell@maconchd.org. We will investigate and complete any required follow-up, per our complaint and enforcement processes. Our goal is to gain compliance through education and support to make the Macon County community the safest, healthiest place possible.

If you have any questions concerning COVID-19 or the regulations, the below websites are very good resources and other questions can be directed to our organization directly. Thank you to everyone for everything you have done so far. We realize there has been loss, sacrifice, hardship, and emotional, mental, and physical effects. However, we are still in this pandemic and must continue to join together to protect and save lives.

Sincerely,



Brandi Binkley, MPA, SHRM-CP, CPHA

Public Health Administrator

Macon County Health Department

Online Resources: www.dph.illinois.gov www.cdc.gov www.maconcountyhealth.org
<https://dceocovid19resources.com/> <https://www.dph.illinois.gov/regionmetrics?regionID=6>