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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 25, 2020

### Macon County at Warning Level for COVID-19

Decatur, IL – Effective Friday, September 25, 2020, Macon County is now considered to be at a warning level for COVID-19. A county is put at warning level when two or more risk indicators increase. In Macon County, the number of cases per 100,000 people has been over 50 and the weekly number of deaths has increased more than 20% for two consecutive weeks. At this time, other indicators are within target in Macon County.

The intended use of this data is for community residents to more strongly consider their behaviors including but not limited to: hosting or attending gatherings; what types of activities in which they choose to participate; and strongly implementing all precautionary measures.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic response, Macon County community leaders have been proactive in addressing issues; promoting mitigations; and encouraging the community at large to take ownership of their actions as a way to decrease the transmission of COVID-19. Entities in Macon County have already implemented mitigation measures including, but not limited to: increasing testing and contact tracing capacity; encouraging testing of residents when appropriate; educating the community about preventive measures that can be taken; working with schools and various types of congregate settings; educating businesses and the public on the importance of compliance with public health recommendations; and following up on complaints of non-compliance.

There are numerous ways a county reaches warning level. However, some common factors for an increase in cases and outbreaks are associated with large gatherings and events; bars and restaurants; refusal to wear a mask or cloth face covering appropriately; long-term care facilities; schools; lack of following public health guidance; and cases among the community at large. Community transmission is also increasing.

Many mitigation measures have been taken prior to this warning level status. However, the healthcare system and community leaders call on *all* community residents to do their part to prevent the spread of this virus. All members of the public should be avoiding large gatherings; social distancing even if wearing a cloth or face covering; wearing a mask or cloth face covering the correct way; participating in contact tracing if contacted by the health department; adhering to isolation and quarantine guidance if directed; staying home if they are sick; and strictly adhering to all public health guidance. All members of the community must do their part in this pandemic to protect the lives of Macon County residents and visitors.

The metrics referenced are updated weekly, from the Sunday-Saturday of the prior week. A map and information of each county's status can be found on the IDPH website at

<https://www.dph.illinois.gov/countymetrics>. A list of the indicators is included for review. The indicators referenced are as follows:

- **New cases per 100,000 people.** If there are more than 50 new cases per 100,000 people in the county, this triggers a warning.
- **Number of deaths.** This metric indicates a warning when the weekly number of deaths increases more than 20% for two consecutive weeks.
- **Weekly test positivity.** This metric indicates a warning when the 7-day test positivity rate rises above 8%.
- **ICU availability.** If there are fewer than 20% of intensive care units available in the region, this triggers a warning.
- **Weekly emergency department visits.** This metric indicates a warning when the weekly percent of COVID-19-like-illness emergency department visits increase by more than 20% for two consecutive weeks.
- **Weekly hospital admissions.** A warning is triggered when the weekly number of hospital admissions for COVID-19-like-illness increases by more than 20% for two consecutive weeks.
- **Tests performed.** This metric is used to provide context and indicate if more testing is needed in the county.
- **Clusters.** This metric looks at the percent of COVID-19 cases associated with clusters or outbreaks and is used to understand large increase in cases

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**For more information, please contact:**

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