



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Macon County COVID-19 Update

At this time, COVID-19 case numbers are the highest they have been, thus far in the pandemic. The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) has centralized contact tracing in order to help address the high volume of cases for all health departments. The state Surge Center will be sending automated text messages where people can opt in or out. If a person has not received a call or text message, they can call 312-777-1999. Residents who do not have internet or need additional assistance, can call our COVID-19 Operator Hotline at 217-480-9332. The MCHD will still be involved in handling some cases, long-term care facilities, congregate settings, in addition to outbreaks and clusters.

Macon County has also seen its first laboratory-confirmed Omicron case. However, based on the activity and case numbers we are seeing, we do feel as though the Omicron variant is much more widespread in our community. The test positivity rates at our local testing sites have increased exponentially, and our two local hospitals are seeing rooms being filled at an alarming and overwhelming rate. Macon County's positivity rate and additional data can be found at the following link: <https://dph.illinois.gov/covid19/data/countymetrics.html...>

The IDPH along with the Centers for Disease for Control and Prevention have updated the isolation guidance. Individuals who have tested positive should stay home and isolate from others for at least 5 full days (day 0 is the first day of symptoms or the date of the day of the positive viral test for asymptomatic persons). They should wear a mask when around others at home and in public for an additional 5 days. If a person continues to have fever or your other symptoms have not improved after 5 days of isolation, you should wait to end your isolation until you are fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication and your other symptoms have improved. People who are confirmed to have COVID-19 or are showing symptoms of COVID-19 need to isolate regardless of their vaccination status. This includes:

- People who have a positive viral test for COVID-19, regardless of whether or not they have symptoms.
- People with symptoms of COVID-19, including people who are awaiting test results or have not been tested. People with symptoms should isolate even if they do not know if they have been in close contact with someone with COVID-19.

The MCHD is not a testing site. Residents should not come to the health department if they are COVID positive or a close contact.

Businesses in our area should be aware that the MCHD and the state Surge Center may not be providing letters to return to work in most instances; therefore, we encourage businesses to stop requiring a return-to-work letter unless absolutely necessary. Due to centralization, it may not be possible for the local health department to provide letters to all people in isolation or quarantine.

The MCHD and our partners across the community are urging people to do the right thing. It is up to every single community member to take the appropriate steps to reduce the spread of this virus and do their part to help relieve the immense strain it is putting on our healthcare systems. We are dedicated to providing information on ways to protect yourselves; sharing lists of testing sites; and consistently encouraging all eligible residents to get vaccinated and boosted. We will continue to provide links on where to find current, relevant COVID-19 guidance, and provide weekly updates. This information is constantly changing, so please educate

yourselves and continue to check this information regularly for updated guidance. It is up to the community. Please protect yourself and those close to you.

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