

Delaware County Health Department

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

DELAWARE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT REPORTS INCREASING HOSPITALIZATIONS

DELAWARE COUNTY, IN- The Delaware County Health Department (DCHD) reports Tuesday of an increase in local hospitalizations and concern over regional healthcare capacity.

“Ongoing discussions with local healthcare providers have raised concerns over the status of COVID-19 in East Central Indiana, as well as statewide”, states DCHD Administrator, Jammie Bane. “Early on we talked about “flattening the curve” in order to protect our critical healthcare infrastructure and it’s ability to care for individuals needing any form of medical care. Until very recently, the caseload and severity of illnesses experienced in East Central Indiana were manageable, with the majority of cases not needing hospitalization. We’re seeing some changes to this now, with single digit hospitalization numbers in the past to numbers approaching 50 at some points now.”

According to the CDC, COVID-19 spreads very easily from person to person, and most commonly through close contact. This occurs primarily through contact with respiratory droplets that are exhaled, or expelled while speaking, coughing, sneezing, singing, etc. For this reason, avoiding crowds and social distancing of 6 feet minimum is critical to minimizing your risk of contracting COVID-19. Less common but still of concern is transmission through airborne means. This occurs when very fine particles are generated through sneezing, coughing, singing, heavy breathing, etc and bring about the additional concern of lingering in the air and providing a route of transmission that can occur even at distances greater than 6 feet. Infection through touch surfaces is no longer believed to be a common means of COVID-19 transmission, however it is strongly recommended that proper hand hygiene be maintained at all times.

“We’re worried that the statewide move into phase 5 of the Governor’s reopening plan has caused people to get careless. This pandemic is still here. We strongly recommend individuals wear a mask at all times when in public or exposed to others, and avoid crowds whenever possible. We’re seeing indoor events advertised like concerts and wrestling events. These types of gatherings should be avoided at this time. They should not be hosted, and they should not be attended”, stated Delaware County Health Officer, Donna Wilkins, MD. “We’re recommending at this time that individuals reconsider their plans to attend any indoor or even outdoor events where social distancing and proper mask use are not being followed or enforced.”

Administrator Bane added “We as a community have the ability to slow the spread of this virus. Take responsibility for your own health and that of your family and loved ones first and foremost. Do this by following precautions at all times. If you feel unsafe in any given situation, removing yourself immediately is still an option available to you and within your control.”

The best ways to protect yourself and others from any respiratory illness, including COVID-19 and the flu, are to:

- Avoid unnecessary exposure and close contact (within 6 feet) with others.
- Avoid all indoor crowds and gatherings not allowing for mask use and distancing when possible, and always stay home when you are sick (seek medical attention when necessary).
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.
- Wash your hands often w/ soap & water for at least 20 seconds. If soap & water are not available, use alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands; and wear a mask at all times when exposed to others.

The Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH) provides statewide updates as new information becomes available. Visit the ISDH website at in.gov/coronavirus for the most up-to-date information on COVID-19 in Indiana.

For updated local information: The Delaware County Emergency Management Agency, in collaboration with the Delaware County Office of Information Services, have created and are maintaining a central location for local updates. Please visit the Delaware County, Indiana Coronavirus Hub at www.dcema.com.

Jammie Bane, Administrator
Delaware County Health Department