Release Date: January 7, 2021

The following COVID-19 update is brought to you through a collaboration of healthcare partners including Delaware County Health Department, Delaware County Emergency Management Agency, Delaware County Office of Information, and other major healthcare providers. Delaware County weekly COVID-19 updates are released every Thursday and include information from the Indiana State Department of Health county metrics dashboard, which is updated every Wednesday afternoon.

Coming off the holiday season, Delaware County is ranked orange on the Indiana State Department of Health's county metrics map. Orange is the second-to-worst score a county can receive, indicating moderate to high level of community spread of COVID-19. The entire state currently ranks either orange or red (the worst score a county can receive), with a majority of counties in red.

Since the last county-wide update on Dec. 23, Delaware County has reported 998 new cases and 5 new deaths. The county's current 7-day positivity rate is at 13.8%; the CDC suggests this number should be well under 5%. As of Jan. 6, IU Health Ball is treating 55 confirmed cases of COVID-19, 39 of which are Delaware County residents.

Though the number of cases has continued to rise, so too have the number of vaccines distributed. Since the vaccines first arrived in Delaware County in late December, IU Health Ball Memorial Hospital has administered 2,852 vaccines to IU Health team members and other community healthcare workers, as of Jan. 4. Because the vaccine is administered in two doses spaced three weeks apart, effects of the vaccinations may not be seen for a few more weeks still.

"We are at the bend in the tunnel where we can almost see the light," said Dr. Carl Pafford, an emergency medicine physician at the hospital. "We will continue to get closer to that light as people continue to get the immunizations. We aren't there yet, but this is a major step."

Delaware County will receive additional doses of the vaccine weekly beginning next week; these doses will be earmarked for specific priority groups as identified and specified by the CDC and Indiana State Department of Health.

The first priority group is those age 80 and older, Governor Eric Holcomb announced on Wednesday. Indiana residents who fall within that age bracket will be able to schedule their COVID-19 vaccinate beginning Friday, Jan. 8. To schedule a vaccination, visit ourshot.in.gov or call 211. There is no charge for the vaccination.

Those who are eligible for the vaccine will be notified via postal mail from the state, as well as through additional communications efforts. Eligibility information will also be shared online at coronavirus.in.gov/vaccine as updates become available. Local vaccination information can be found at OurShotDelawareCounty.org.

The number of vaccines allocated to each county will be limited, though the quantities are expected to increase in coming weeks.

At the local level, in addition to healthcare workers and those 80 and older, vaccines are slowly making their way to schools.

"Our school nurses have now received their first COVID-19 vaccinations, and we are eagerly awaiting word on when our staff will be able to start getting vaccinated, too," said Lee Ann Kwiatkowski, director of public education/CEO of Muncie Community Schools. As of Jan. 5, MCS has 12 active cases of COIVD-19 throughout the district, all of which tested positive over Winter Break.

Jammie Bane, administrator of the Delaware County Health Department, said he doesn't anticipate the vaccine to be widely available to the general public until March at the earliest, but this is subject to change based on vaccine availability and demand.

For more information on Delaware County's COVID-19 total cases and deaths, testing location information and vaccine availability updates, visit dcema.org.

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Frequently Asked Questions
How do I get vaccinated for COVID-19?
Beginning Friday, Jan. 8, Indiana residents age 80 and older will be able to schedule their COVID-19 vaccination. There is no charge for the vaccination.

Individuals can schedule online or by phone.

To schedule online:
- Starting this Friday, those age 80 and older can visit ourshot.IN.gov and follow the instructions to find a vaccine site.
- The site will ask questions to make sure you meet criteria.
- A map will display vaccination sites closest to you.
- Choose a site and register for a date and time.

To schedule by phone:
- For those unable to register online, call 211 to register by phone. The call center is open daily from 8 a.m.–9 p.m.

Other notes of importance:
- Registering another individual on their behalf is permitted.
- Transportation assistance can be requested by calling 211.
- Citizenship is not required for vaccination, and citizenship information is not collected.
- Photo ID may be required at the time of vaccination.

Local vaccination information can be found at OurShotDelawareCounty.org.

How will I know when I become eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine?
Those who are eligible for the vaccine will be notified via postal mail from the state, as well as through additional communications efforts. Eligibility information will also be shared online at coronavirus.in.gov/vaccine as updates become available.

Will vaccines allow an immediate return to normal? What should people expect over the next few months?
We should not expect a significant impact from the vaccines anytime soon. The vaccine supply will arrive in phases and is expected to be very limited in quantity initially.

I got tested for COVID-19. Now what?
Individuals who get tested because they have symptoms should quarantine after their test until they receive their results. If the test is positive, they must continue to isolate. Isolation can end after ALL of the following have occurred:
- 10 days have passed since onset of symptoms
- If fever was a symptom, 24 hours have passed with no fever, without use of fever-reducing drugs
- Other symptoms are improving (however, loss of taste/smell may persist and does not to be factored into this requirement)

However, a person who has tested positive should follow their healthcare provider's advice on when to end isolation.

The official recommendation for quarantine of someone identified as a close contact remains at 14 days. The CDC has recently announced options for shortening this timeframe to 10 or even possibly 7 days, if certain criteria are met. We suggest these options only be considered for use by individuals who would fall under the CDC guidelines for "Critical Infrastructure." Employers retain the ability to, and are recommended to, require 14-day quarantine of any potentially exposed staff members. The 7- and 10-day options, in summary:
- Quarantine can end after day 10 without testing and if **NO** symptoms have been reported during daily monitoring.
- When testing is readily available, quarantine can end as early as day 7 with a negative test result; **HOWEVER**, the test can be conducted no earlier than day 5 of the quarantine period.

In either situation, after stopping quarantine, people should
- Watch for symptoms until 14 days after exposure.
- If they have symptoms, immediately self-isolate and contact their local public health authority or healthcare provider, as well as their employer if necessary.
- Wear a mask, stay at least 6 feet from others, wash their hands, and avoid crowds.

Again, the standing recommendation for quarantine of close contacts remains at 14 days.
For more information, please visit cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/quarantine or cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/more/scientific-brief-options-to-reduce-quarantine.

What is a "close contact"?
The CDC definition of "close contact" includes the following:
- You were within 6 feet of someone who has COVID-19 for a total of 15 minutes or more, with or without masks. (This is 15 total minutes over the course of 24 hours. E.g., three five-minute periods of time throughout one day would count as close contact.)
- You provided care at home to someone who is sick with COVID-19.
- You had direct physical contact with the person (hugged or kissed them).
- You shared eating or drinking utensils.
- They sneezed, coughed, or somehow got respiratory droplets on you.

Should I/my child get tested for COVID-19 even if only mild cold-like symptoms, like a runny nose, are present?

Anyone experiencing symptoms of illness should isolate at home to avoid the risk of spreading illness to others. With the improved availability of testing, DCHD would further recommend testing to any such individual. Additional information concerning when you can return to work and what to do if your test is positive is available for review at cdc.gov.

If I test positive for COVID-19, how should close contacts be informed?
Anyone who tests positive should proactively seek to notify anyone they have had close contact with, as far back as 48 hours before their symptom onset. Positive individuals should also cooperate with any contact tracing calls they receive from the State, so that state contact tracers can also document and notify close contacts of their need to quarantine.

What should I do if I witness a business and/or citizen failing to comply with guidelines from the state or county?
Complaints can be lodged through the Delaware County Health Department Citizen Complaint Form, most easily available through the Delaware County Coronavirus Hub at dcema.org.

Will getting a flu shot protect me from COVID-19?
While some evidence exists that the flu vaccine may help with protection against COVID-19, this vaccine should not be considered a protection against COVID-19. Instead, protection against influenza infection may prove beneficial to the population by lowering the number of flu illnesses overall and freeing up space in the healthcare system for those infected with COVID-19 or needing other healthcare.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?
People who have COVID-19 may exhibit any range of these symptoms, and some may even show no symptoms at all. Symptoms may appear 2–14 days after being exposed to the virus. Some symptoms of COVID-19 include:
- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

Anyone with these symptoms should stay home as much as possible and limit their exposure to others. Children who have any of the above symptoms should be kept home from school. For more information, read the Indiana State Department of Health's guidelines for returning to school here.

Families with children in school can find additional information and resources at educationsupporthub.com.

What should I do if I think I might have COVID-19?
If you have any of the above symptoms or have been in contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19, you should immediately begin to self-quarantine to prevent spreading the disease to others. You should also call a local health clinic to arrange to be tested. Follow your doctor's orders and continue to self-quarantine until you receive negative test results.

Children who exhibit any of the above symptoms should NOT be sent to school. If your child shows any of the listed symptoms, keep the child home in quarantine and contact your healthcare provider for further guidance. Families with children in school can find additional information and resources at educationsupporthub.com.

Where can I get tested?
Several local health clinics offer COVID-19 tests, including Meridian Health Services, Open Door Health Services, and more.

Open Door offers free community tests for individuals with or without symptoms, made available through a partnership with the Delaware County Health Department. Those who wish to get tested are encouraged to register online in advance at opendoorhs.org/testing for a quicker testing visit. For anyone unable to pre-register, on-site registration is available.

Open Door also provides neighborhood-based testing. These sites currently include the Buley Center on the second and fourth Tuesday of every month from 9 a.m. until 1 p.m., as well as Avondale United Methodist Church every Thursday from 2–5 p.m. The program will continue to grow; visit opendoorhs.org/testing for additions or changes to the schedule.

For a complete list of testing locations in Delaware County, visit the Delaware County Indiana Coronavirus Hub. Be advised that some locations may test only those who exhibit symptoms of COVID-19.

Staying Safe from COVID-19
To keep yourself safe from COVID-19 and to reduce the spread of the disease, wash your hands often for at least 20 seconds, wear a mask when inside public spaces and when in crowded areas, and practice social distancing.

If you have symptoms of COVID-19 or have been in contact with someone who tested positive, schedule an appointment to get tested as soon as possible. Self-quarantine until you have received negative test results. A list of testing locations can be found on the Delaware County Indiana Coronavirus hub.

Under state mandate, gatherings in Delaware County are currently limited to no more than 50 people. Events with more than 50 attendees will not be approved by the Delaware County Health Department.