



ITASCA COUNTY HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

ITASCA RESOURCE CENTER

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Visit us at: www.co.itasca.mn.us

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ITASCA COUNTY AREA BALANCING OPENING AND RISKS

(Grand Rapids, Minn., May 28, 2020) – As Minnesota prepares to enter the second phase of its Stay Safe MN plan on June 1, laboratory confirmed COVID-related cases and deaths in Itasca County continue to rise, according to Itasca County Public Health and Minnesota Department of Health. Confirmed cases as of noon Thursday, May 28, stood at 56. Sadly, Itasca County has lost two more residents to COVID-19, a male in his 50s and a male in his 90s, bringing area deaths to nine.

“We grieve with all families suffering because of this virus,” said Kelly Chandler, department manager, Itasca County Public Health. “Our communities are not immune to the devastation of COVID-19. The impacts of this virus are reaching every person in every part of our county, so it will be up to us as individuals, families and communities to protect and care for each other. And when we do, we can begin to imagine stronger, healthier communities and life that looks more like normal. If we don’t, this is going to take longer and be even more devastating.”

The State of Minnesota’s Stay Safe MN plan allows for increased opening of services, including elective procedures, such as chiropractic and orthopedics.

According to Dr. Eric Warne, chiropractor at Grand Itasca Clinic & Hospital, the facility has continued to provide care to patients critically needing it during the COVID crisis. “We are now able to see patients that have been waiting patiently to resume care, of course with enhanced safety procedures in place,” said Dr. Warne. “As a chiropractor, I am able help individuals improve their musculoskeletal health and relieve symptoms for which patients may otherwise seek prescription medications and/or surgery. Particularly as many of those in our community have been out of routine during this crisis, our bodies may be in greater need of restored spinal health.

“Other ways to keep your spine healthy include frequent exercise and stretching. Exercise can mean many things, including performing many household chores or projects. It is recommended to warm up prior to any exercise with stretching or a brisk walk. This allows your joints and muscles to loosen up to prepare for more strenuous activity.”



Bigfork Valley also has been able to increase services, recently increasing its capacity to schedule outpatient appointments in its Chiropractic Center, Rehab Department, and Orthopedic Clinic. Bigfork Valley also began resuming surgical procedures, including orthopedics and will continue to increase its schedule to accommodate the needs of our patients.

According to Angela Kleffman, Bigfork Valley chief operating officer, “While we increase our availability, we will prioritize visits to care for those that need it most.

“To provide the highest quality care while protecting our staff and patients, we have implemented necessary changes. When you schedule an appointment or attend your visit, expect that things will be a little different. We will continue to operate at a reduced capacity for the time being to eliminate waiting room time, to reduce unnecessary interaction, and to allow additional time to disinfect between patients.

“Patients will be screened over the phone for symptoms of COVID-19 upon scheduling. We ask that if you begin experiencing symptoms prior to your appointment that you contact your healthcare provider and cancel your outpatient appointment. COVID-19 screening is being conducted on all patients, staff, and visitors upon entry to the facility, and universal masking is required on our campus. Please wear a cloth facemask when visiting Bigfork Valley to help manage our supply. We continue limiting visitors and ask that you attend your appointment alone if able, or that they remain in the car during your visit.

“We will continue to be here for you when you need us most and are confident that we have implemented the necessary changes to deliver quality healthcare with your safety in mind.”

Itasca County’s enhanced Call Center now provides live staffing Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., at 218-327-6784 for those with COVID-related issues and needs.

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Helpful resources:

American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons:

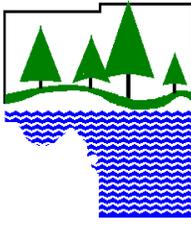
Elective surgery <https://www.orthoinfo.org/en/treatment/questions-and-answers-for-patients-regarding-elective-surgery-and-covid-19/>

Keeping kids active <https://www.orthoinfo.org/en/staying-healthy/keeping-kids-active-during-covid-19/>

Stay healthy and active <https://www.orthoinfo.org/en/staying-healthy/staying-fit-and-active-during-covid-19/>

BBC:

Working from home and ergonomics <https://www.bbc.com/worklife/article/20200508-how-to-work-from-home-comfortably-ergonomic-tips-covid-19>



Note to media: Itasca County Health Department will host 30-minute press briefings on Fridays at 10:00 a.m. as needed. Recordings available. Contact anna.anttila@co.itasca.mn.us for more information.

Media Contacts

Please contact each organization individually or Itasca County staff: Kelly Chandler (218-327-6144 and Kelly.chandler@co.itasca.mn.us) or Anna Anttila (anna.anttila@co.itasca.mn.us).