



ITASCA COUNTY HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

ITASCA RESOURCE CENTER

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

COVID-19 CASES SPIKE AMONG ITASCA COUNTY RESIDENTS

(Grand Rapids, Minn., **July 13, 2020**) – As of 9:00 a.m. on Monday, July 13, Itasca County is up to 76 laboratory-confirmed cases of COVID-19, an increase of eight residents since Friday. According to Kelly Chandler, department manager for Itasca County Public Health, several additional tests conducted over the weekend remain pending. Itasca County deaths related to COVID-19 remain at 12.

“We definitely are seeing an increase in Itasca County cases of residents in their 20s,” said Chandler. “We also are seeing some cases from contact over the Fourth of July weekend and will continue to see the impact from those situations in the next week or two.”

Itasca County Public Health staff will reach out to newly positive cases and determine who may have been close contacts. County staff will provide information and support to those diagnosed, as well as those with whom they have had close contact and now may need to self-quarantine.

For those seeking testing in Itasca County, the following facilities are available:

Bigfork Valley and Scenic Rivers

In Bigfork, COVID-19 testing is available through collaborative efforts between Bigfork Valley Hospital and Scenic Rivers Health Services Clinic. Curbside testing is available by appointment from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. Tests sent to the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) in accordance with their testing requirements have a turnaround time of three to four days. Due to the increased demand for testing in the state, results sent to Bigfork’s third-party lab, LabCorp, may have a turnaround time of seven to eight days. Urgent testing for emergency room transfers, hospitalized patients, symptomatic senior services residents and tenants, surgical patients, and ill healthcare workers at Bigfork Valley may be eligible for in-house testing with a minimum turnaround time of 15 minutes. Rapid testing is supply-dependent and may be extended to additional patients if supplies become more readily available. Patients with questions about whether they should be tested for COVID-19 should contact their primary care provider.



Essentia

SARS-CoV-2 (the virus causing COVID-19) testing is performed at all Essentia Health hospitals, including Essentia Health Deer River. Essentia Health continues to follow Minnesota Department of Health guidelines for testing which includes specific state travel requirements and asymptomatic patients that may have been involved in community protests, including First Responders and volunteers.

Essentia partnered with Mayo Clinic Laboratories for send out-testing. Currently, we are noting an extended delay in result times of up to five days and this has caused some surgeries to be rescheduled or further delayed. Rapid testing has been restricted slightly due to limited supplies. Serology testing for antibodies is also available and is also sent through the Mayo Clinic Laboratories, with a turnaround time of two to four days, depending on volumes. Essentia Health Deer River offers daily curbside testing by appointment from 10:00 a.m. to noon. To assure efficient and timely care, Essentia Health encourages patients to contact their primary care provider for guidance on testing and screening options.

Grand Itasca Clinic & Hospital

If you are experiencing symptoms common with COVID-19 (shortness of breath, fever of 100 degrees, new cough, new aches or pains) or have been exposed to someone known to have COVID-19, you may qualify for a COVID-19 test at Grand Itasca in Grand Rapids. Testing is conducted curbside seven days a week from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. If you wish to be tested, call the appointment line at 218-326-7344 to schedule a telephone visit with a Grand Itasca provider. If the provider determines that you meet the qualifications for testing, you will be given instructions for curbside testing. Tests are sent to the laboratory at M Health Fairview and results are back within 72 hours (more typically within 48 hours). You should self-quarantine until you know the result of your test. Rapid in-house COVID-19 tests are also being conducted at Grand Itasca, but due to limited supplies, they are reserved for very limited cases. If you have any questions about testing at Grand Itasca, please call the main line at 218-326-3401.

Itasca County's Message Center is available for those with COVID-related issues and needs at 218-327-6784. Response calls will be made between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

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Note to media: Itasca County Health Department will host 30-minute press briefings on Thursdays at 10:00 a.m. as needed. In July, briefings are scheduled for July 9 and July 23. 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).

