



ITASCA COUNTY HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
ITASCA RESOURCE CENTER
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ITASCA COUNTY REMAINS IN THE GRIP OF COVID

(Grand Rapids, Minn., **September 28, 2020**) – Itasca County has seen the death of a younger resident due to COVID-19. An area woman in her 50s was taken by the disease in the last several days, as cases in the county continue their rise and its COVID death toll increases to 15.

“We are seeing some bright spots, but deaths like this remind us how deadly the virus is,” said Kelly Chandler, Itasca County Public Health department manager. “Our condolences to her family, friends and all who grieve.”

As of noon on Sept. 28, cumulative cases of COVID-19 among Itasca County residents stand at 350. This is an increase of 38 over the weekend (since Sept. 24) and 57 over the past week (since Sept. 21).

Itasca County cases have been rising since late August, said Chandler. In partnership with the state health department and others, local public health and health and human services staff hosted a testing event in Grand Rapids on Sept. 23. Of the 907 persons tested, 15 tests were positive (a 1.6% positivity rate, lower than the state average).

“We are grateful to the many participants, partners and volunteers who made this free and open testing event possible,” said Chandler. “Through this large effort, we have a better sense of what our positivity rate is and can better direct our public health resources.”

Large testing events continue throughout Minnesota, including Sept. 29 through Oct. 1 in Bemidji. Testing is barrier free and open to all from 12:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. at the Bemidji Armory. Pre-registration is not required, but will make the experience faster. To register online: <https://www.primarybio.com/r/bemidji>.

Testing also remains available through Grand Itasca Clinic & Hospital, Essentia Health Deer River, Bigfork Valley, and Scenic Rivers Clinic. Processes vary, so please call ahead or visit their websites.

Itasca residents with questions or concerns may leave them at the Itasca County COVID message line, with calls returned 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday – Friday. The Itasca COVID line number is 218-327-6784.



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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. The next briefing will be Oct. 1. Recordings available. Contact anna.anttila@co.itasca.mn.us for more information.

Itasca County Public Health media contacts

Kelly Chandler (218-327-6144 and Kelly.chandler@co.itasca.mn.us) or Anna Anttila (anna.anttila@co.itasca.mn.us).