



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

COVID TAKES ANOTHER ITASCA COUNTY LIFE

(Grand Rapids, Minn., **Nov. 17, 2020**) – Itasca County continues its grim rise in cases of COVID-19. As of 5:00 p.m. on Nov. 16, Itasca residents hospitalized because of COVID-19 stands at 19, three are in intensive care units, and a man in his 50s has died.

Over the past seven days, 328 more cases of COVID-19 were diagnosed among Itasca residents and 542 over the past 14, reaching a cumulative total of 1,462 since the pandemic began. The 14-day case rate per 10,000 residents in Itasca County is 118.6 as of Nov. 13.

All area schools have been impacted by COVID-caused staffing shortages, as are many business and non-profit organizations.

“The time is now to shut down transmission of this virus in Itasca County,” said Kelly Chandler, Itasca County Public Health division manager. “While vaccines are on the horizon, we still have a way to go. The good news is, Itascans can make this better. It’s relatively simple—make choices like someone’s life depends on it, because it may.”

While much of community spread of the virus is by those with no symptoms, increasingly spread of COVID is occurring among those who do have signs of sickness, too. Itasca County Public Health urges that:

- If you are waiting for COVID test results, stay home.
- If you experience even mild symptoms that resemble a cold or allergies, stay home and seek testing.
- If you have a positive test, your household members also need to quarantine for 14 days from last exposure.

“Our line of defense remains the same: don’t gather with others outside of your household, wear a mask, and keep six feet of distance,” said Chandler. “The costs in lives, health and incomes is blatantly obvious. There is no hiding from the demands of this pandemic. Choices have consequences.”

In addition to COVID testing available through local health care facilities, Minnesota Department of Health has announced additional saliva testing sites opening on Nov. 18, including at the



National Guard Armory in Hibbing. Home saliva testing kits also are available to any person in Minnesota, delivered to your home with expedited shipping (go to <https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/testsites/athome.html>).

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. Current local data and information also can be found at the county’s website here: <https://www.co.itasca.mn.us/798/COVID-19-Coronavirus-Information>

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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 scheduled briefing will be Dec. 3. There will be no additional November briefing, unless need dictates. 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).