



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

DEMAND FOR VACCINES INCREASES AGAIN IN ITASCA COUNTY

(Grand Rapids, Minn., **May 14, 2021**) – Itasca County saw hopeful signs this week after three months of climbing rates of COVID-19 spread and last week’s news of the Brazil variant being found in the county.

While still very high, Itasca County’s 14-day average per 10,000 residents dropped from the mid-80s last week to 73.8 this week (compared to a low of 14 in February). During the past seven days, 120 Itasca County residents tested positive for COVID and 200 did the week before.

Itasca County saw two additional COVID-related deaths this week, a man in his 80s and a woman in her 60s.

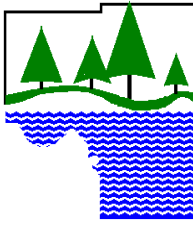
“Itasca County’s cases are moving in a better direction than in past months, but the deaths of two residents this week are grim reminders of how serious COVID remains, especially for those vulnerable and unvaccinated. Our hearts are with those who have suffered through loss and grief during the pandemic,” said Kelly Chandler, Itasca County Public Health division manager.

As of May 13, the percentage of Itasca County residents over age 16 who received at least their first dose of vaccine stands at 52. All three vaccines (Moderna, Pfizer and Johnson & Johnson) are available in the area.

With the additional emergency use authorization of the Pfizer vaccine for those ages 12 to 15 and emerging federal guidance for those fully vaccinated, demand for vaccines is increasing again in the county.

Special events over the next week include a Pfizer vaccination clinic at RJEMS Middle School in Grand Rapids conducted by Grand Itasca Clinic & Hospital for those 12 and over on Tuesday, May 18, starting at 3:45 p.m. RJEMS parents will receive information directly, including links to a consent form to complete in advance, if they choose to have their child vaccinated that day. Pfizer vaccines also will be available through Thrifty White Pharmacy and Walmart Pharmacy as well as Essentia Health Deer River and Fairview Range through their normal channels.

Grand Itasca also has partnered with Second Harvest North Central Food Bank to offer the single-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccines for those ages 16 and older during their Pop-Up Pantry food distribution events throughout the county. These clinics are open to the public and are



walk-in only. The next events are at S. Lake Fire Hall on May 18 (1:00 to 2:00 p.m.) and at West Rapids Elementary (May 20, from 3:00 to 4:00 p.m.)

A special Johnson & Johnson clinic also is planned at Grand Itasca Clinic & Hospital on May 18, (1:00 – 8:00 p.m.). Appointments may be made by calling 218-326-7344 or by logging into MyChart.

Itasca County Public Health is hosting vaccination events as well: on May 17 (Johnson & Johnson) at Kiesler Wellness Center in Grand Rapids (10:30 a.m.– 2:00 p.m.), May 22 (Moderna) at IRA Civic Center (10:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m.) and Sunday, May 23 (Johnson & Johnson) at Bethany Luther Church in Deer River (10:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.). Details on these and other upcoming vaccination events may be found at the county's website: www.co.itasca.mn.us.

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. Information about vaccination options and current local data and information may be found at the county's website here: <https://www.co.itasca.mn.us/798/COVID-19-Coronavirus-Information>

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Itasca County Public Health media contacts

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