



## ITASCA COUNTY HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

ITASCA RESOURCE CENTER

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### SPREAD OF COVID REACHES NEW HIGH IN ITASCA COUNTY

(Grand Rapids, Minn., **Jan. 27, 2022**) – Itasca County has reached a new high point in the pandemic, and not the good kind. As of January 27, the county’s 14-day case rate per 10,000 residents is 171.8, up from 114 last week and blowing past the county’s previous high rate of 129 in late 2020.

Between January 20 and 27, Itasca County saw another 339 residents diagnosed with COVID. Current case rates do not include positive at-home antigen tests, so the number of new COVID cases here is likely even higher.

Over the past two weeks, seven area residents have died due to COVID infection, raising the pandemic total to 128 local neighbors and loved ones lost to COVID.

At the same time as infections here surge, community members and businesses have come together to honor and appreciate frontline workers as part of Project Blue Light. Buildings throughout Itasca County and the Arrowhead region of Minnesota are swapping out lighting to blue this week as part of this recognition. The Itasca County Board also declared this week Frontline Workers Appreciation Week, citing its “utmost appreciation, gratitude, and most importantly, our sincere thanks to all of these individuals and professionals courageously working during the pandemic to serve the citizens of Itasca County.”

For those who have been infected with or exposed to COVID, updated information about quarantine and isolation can be found at the CDC.gov website. Many organizations, including schools, continue to update guidelines specific to their facilities given changing local conditions.

Free COVID vaccines are available at special Itasca County Public Health clinics at the Itasca Resource Center throughout February (see the Itasca County website for details). Scenic Rivers clinic in Bigfork, Essentia Health in Deer River and Grand Itasca Clinic & Hospital in Grand Rapids, and area pharmacies continue to offer these lifesaving vaccines.

COVID tests are available throughout the county, as well as free online through the federal website COVIDtests.gov and Minnesota’s at-home saliva test available at vaulthealth.com.

“Those experiencing significant symptoms and those especially vulnerable should stay in touch with their physicians,” said Kelly Chandler, division manager, Itasca County Public Health. “Itasca providers have access to medicines and therapies that can be extremely helpful but may need to be given early. Do not suffer in silence.”

Itasca residents with questions or concerns may leave them at the Itasca County COVID message line, with calls returned 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. The Itasca COVID line number is 218-327-6784.

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