



ITASCA COUNTY HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

ITASCA RESOURCE CENTER

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

COVID SPREADING QUICKLY AGAIN IN ITASCA COUNTY

Symptoms are more subtle, still unpredictable

(Grand Rapids, Minn., **May 10, 2022**) – The spread of COVID infection among Itasca County residents is spiking again, likely because of the extremely transmissible Omicron BA.2 variant. Early detection (testing) can mean the difference between hospitalization and inconvenience for someone infected.

Between April 25 and May 9, Itasca County has seen 104 new cases of COVID confirmed through clinic/hospital (PCR) laboratory tests. This does not include at-home (antigen) testing. Of those confirmed, 64 were in the past week. The case rate in Itasca County has quickly gone from almost nothing a few weeks ago to a 14-day average of 23.5 per 10,000 residents.

“COVID remains among us, and it’s unpredictable,” said Kelly Chandler, Itasca County Public Health division manager. “Please consider testing and stay home if you have symptoms resembling allergies or colds. We know that this variant of COVID is extremely spreadable, and there’s no way to predict who will get very sick or have long-lasting impacts.”

Itasca area health providers now have access to a highly effective anti-viral medication that helps to prevent hospitalization among those most vulnerable, but it must be given in the first five days of infection. “Be sure to contact your health care provider if you test positive to determine if early treatment is indicated,” said Chandler.

Itasca County has seen five COVID-caused hospitalizations over the past two weeks and no additional deaths, thanks in large part to vaccinations and immunity. Vaccinations and boosters are widely available throughout the area, which enhance and prolong protection against COVID’s worst impacts.

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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