



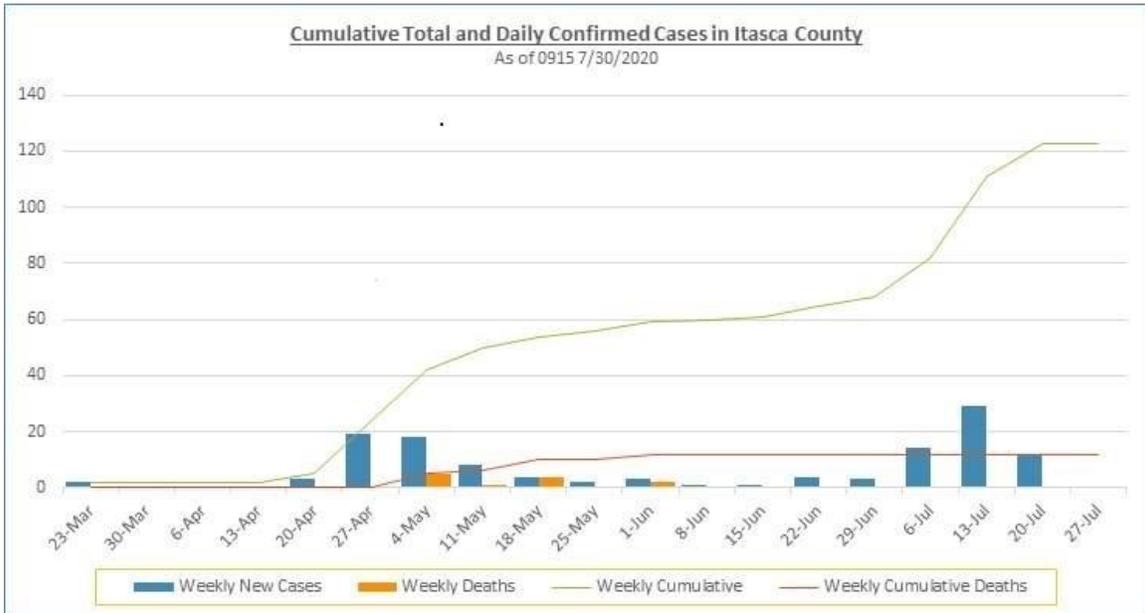
ITASCA COUNTY HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
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*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*

ITASCA COUNTY CONTINUES TO BATTLE COVID-19 CASES

(Grand Rapids, Minn., **August 4, 2020**) – Itasca County continues to work to reverse the spike it saw in laboratory-confirmed cases of COVID-19 among its residents following the July Fourth holiday. As of 11:00 a.m. Monday, Aug. 3, a total of 132 Itasca County residents have received laboratory-confirmed diagnoses of COVID-19, with seven diagnosed since the county’s last news release on July 27. The county has seen no additional deaths.



Source: Minnesota Department of Health (July 27 numbers not yet available)

Of the 132 total cumulative Itasca County cases to date, 89 showed symptoms, 20 had shown no symptoms, and for 23 people this was unknown. Most (99) were no longer in isolation (if 10 days from test date if asymptomatic or 10 days from symptom onset and/or are improved in symptoms and fever free for 24 hours without medication). The number of those remaining in isolation is 21 (does not reflect close personal contacts who are in quarantine) and the number of those who, sadly, have passed away remains at 12.



County by county data is a key factor in deciding how area schools will approach their fall programming. On July 30, Minnesota Governor Tim Walz announced guidance for the state’s public and charter schools regarding plans for fall 2020.

According to the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) in its announcement on July 27, “The state’s policy is to encourage learning in the classroom because, apart from the instructional benefits, it helps children with personal and social development. However, the decision is left up to each school district in consultation with health and education officials. Schools can switch to distance learning or a combination of both in-person and online learning to keep students and staff safe from COVID-19.”

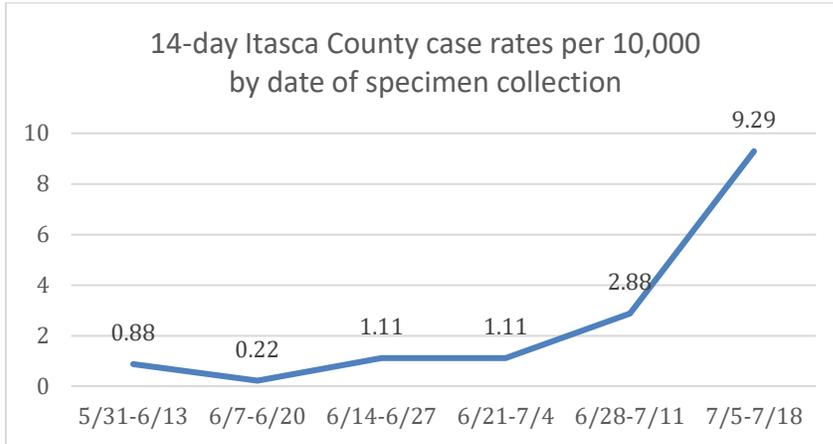
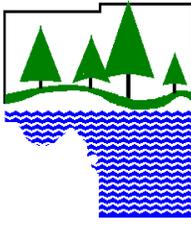
As districts finalize their approaches, MDE said, “One big factor will be the COVID-19 infection rate in each county. Using data compiled by the Minnesota Department of Health, the guidelines set out five scenarios depending on the infection rate over the previous two weeks, with classroom learning for the lowest rates and distance learning for the highest. In between will be hybrid models. These are guidelines, not mandates, and each district can take a different approach based on its unique circumstances. Schools must also take into consideration the physical layout of their buildings, including filtration systems.”

### **Recommended policy options based on 14-day case rate range**

<b>Policy Option</b>	<b>Range (14-day case rate per 10,000 people)</b>
In-person learning for all students	0 to less than 10
Elementary in-person, Middle/high school hybrid	10 to less than 20
Both hybrid	20 to less than 30
Elementary hybrid, Middle/high school distance	30 to less than 50
Both distance	50 or more

*Source: Minnesota Department of Education*

As of July 27, Minnesota Department of Health said that Itasca County’s 14-day case rate was 9.29 diagnosed as positive per 10,000 people, giving county school districts the starting policy option of “in-person learning for all students.” Given that the data is based on the date of specimen collection (the date a person was tested), the July 5-18 range is the most recent available.



Data: Minnesota Department of Health, updated Thursdays

School districts serving Itasca County residents (ISD 316-Greenway, ISD 317-Deer River, ISD 318 Grand Rapids and Bigfork and ISD 319-Nashwauk-Keewatin) are expected to announce details of their fall plans over coming weeks. Bug O Nay Ge Shig School in Bena has opted to start the 2020-21 school year utilizing an online distance learning program.

Questions or concerns among Itasca residents may be directed to the Itasca COVID line, which is currently staffed 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday – Friday, and 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays to address questions related to COVID-19, executive orders, etc. 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 August 6 briefing will focus on plans for local schools. Recordings available. Contact [anna.anttila@co.itasca.mn.us](mailto:anna.anttila@co.itasca.mn.us) for more information.*

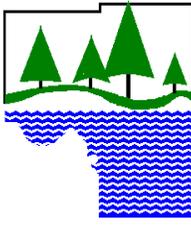
#### Itasca County Public Health media contacts

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

#### Helpful resources:

Executive order regarding 20-21 school year: [https://mn.gov/governor/assets/EO%2020-82%20Final%20Signed%20and%20Filed\\_tcm1055-442391.pdf](https://mn.gov/governor/assets/EO%2020-82%20Final%20Signed%20and%20Filed_tcm1055-442391.pdf)

Minnesota Department of Health / Data for K-12 Schools  
<https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/stats/wschooll.pdf>



Fact sheet on Minnesota's mask mandate:

<https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/facecover.html>

Ideas for making a mask – sewn, non-sewn, and out of household items:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/how-to-make-cloth-face-covering.html>

How to wash cloth face coverings: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/how-to-wash-cloth-face-coverings.html>

