

Lake County Updates

- As of yesterday afternoon, **Lake County has 2,388 COVID-19 cases and 93 deaths.**
- Illinois has reported 35,108 cases and 1,565 deaths in the state. Over 164,000 tests have been administered. Governor J.B. Pritzker announced this week that **models now predict that Illinois cases may peak in mid-May.**
- Case information is updated daily on our **Coronavirus Data Hub**, www.lakecountyil.gov/COVID19data. Today, the Health Department launched an upgraded COVID-19 Cases by Municipality map to bring further clarity on case locations. When you click a municipality, you will now see a breakdown of cases by municipality and those in unincorporated areas surrounding the municipality.
- The Health Department is investigating **30 long-term care facilities** that have at least 2 cases. These facilities have a combined total of **437 cases and 61 deaths.**
 - The Health Department routinely communicates with all long-term care facilities in the county to assure they are following best practices to prevent COVID-19 infections.
 - In any facility with a positive COVID-19 case, the Health Department offers personal protective equipment (PPE) and a Communicable Disease investigator is in daily contact with the facility to trace contacts of infected individuals, to assist in monitoring residents and staff for respiratory symptoms, and to advise the facility on mitigation actions they need to take to prevent further spread of the virus.
 - The Illinois Department of Public Health has launched a web page listing the locations of long-term care facility outbreaks in the State. The page is updated weekly. <http://www.dph.illinois.gov/covid19/long-term-care-facility-outbreaks-covid-19>
- **As testing expands** in the State of Illinois, we remind residents to contact their primary care physician if they are experiencing symptoms. Not everyone needs to be tested, and many people have mild symptoms and can recover at home.
- We have received increasing questions about **types of testing** offered in Lake County. There are two main types available to Lake County clinicians.
 - **Molecular Testing** is used to detect active infection with SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. This test uses a sample taken from the nose and/or throat. Results are generally available in hours to several days, and some rapid tests are available with results available within an hour. Molecular tests may not detect if you were infected in the past, and also may not detect the virus in the early stages of the incubation period, before symptoms develop.
 - **Serology (Antibody) Testing** uses a blood sample to detect antibodies to SARS-CoV-2. A positive test result may indicate that person was previously infected with the virus. The test cannot be used to detect or diagnose active COVID-19 infection. It also can't tell you if you are protected from infection, or your length of protection. The test may also detect other coronaviruses that do not cause COVID-19.

- When it comes to testing, **the Health Department's priority is expanding capacity for molecular testing** to identify residents who are currently infected so we can help prevent further spread of the virus. The Health Department is also reviewing new testing methods that are becoming available to identify those that have been scientifically validated.
- Our **Stay Home, Save Lives** campaign continues. Please share the Health Department's content via email newsletters, your website, and social media. For the full toolkit, visit our website, <https://www.lakecountyiil.gov/4431/Stay-Home-Save-Lives-Toolkit>. If your business or organization wants to participate, please contact Danielle Ryan at dryan@lakecountyiil.gov.
- Yesterday Governor J.B. Pritzker stated that he is looking to **extend the stay-at-home order**, which is set to expire on April 30, but he has not determined for how long. We expect an update soon. **Schools will remain closed** through the end of the school year.
- **Several Lake County municipalities are now requiring face coverings in public.** Highland Park, Deerfield, Mundelein, North Chicago, and Waukegan have announced these measures. Please pay attention to your local municipality for details on new requirements.
 - Even if your municipality does not mandate the use of face coverings, we encourage everyone to wear one whenever in public to protect others in the community.
 - Information on how to wear and care for cloth face coverings, including DIY instructions for creating them from common household items are available on the CDC website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>.
- The State is taking the lead on coordinating and opening alternate care sites in Illinois. Should the need arise, **Lake County has developed a plan for an alternate care site**, which is currently being reviewed by the State. At this time, Lake County hospitals have not requested an alternate care site because there is currently enough space in hospitals to care for patients.
- The Health Department and Lake County government continue to address critical needs identified in our communities.
 - We are working with community partners, businesses, and the State to secure and distribute **personal protective equipment** to long-term care facilities and first responders. So far over 400,000 PPE items have been distributed.
 - We are **working closely with homeless services providers** to ensure that people experience homelessness have access to telemedicine and behavioral health services. Individuals experiencing homelessness have been moved to motels.
 - We are working with the Illinois Emergency Management Association and hotels to secure **alternative housing** for people who may not be able to return home due to COVID-19 illness.
 - We are working with **emergency food services and pantries and local community organizations** to accommodate the increased food needs within the county.

- We are working closely with United Way in identifying **volunteer opportunities** and coordinate volunteers to assist with the COVID-19 response. Visit www.211lakecounty.org for a current list of opportunities and to sign up.
- Many people are facing layoffs and financial challenges during this time. We wanted to highlight a few options for assistance.
 - **SNAP (formerly known as food stamps) benefits are expanded for April and May.** Those currently receiving this benefit should see the maximum benefit amount which will be automatically deposited onto their Link card.
 - If someone needs **help filling out an application**, the Northern Illinois Food Bank has a hotline: 844-600-SNAP (7627) or email snap@northernilfoodbank.org, or visit <https://solvehungertoday.org/get-help/snap-food-stamps/>.
 - **If someone loses their insurance** because they lost their job, they are eligible for a special enrollment period for health insurance. They can explore their options at healthcare.gov or GetCoveredIllinois.Gov.
 - Additionally, people with low income may be eligible for **Medicaid**. People who are eligible can enroll in Medicaid at any time.
 - You can enroll in SNAP and Medicaid at ABE.Illinois.gov. Even if someone is unsure if they would be eligible, there is a tool on the website called “Check if I should apply.”
- Illinois has launched **Call4Calm**, a free **emotional support text line** for Illinois residents experiencing stress and mental health issues related to COVID-19. To speak with a local mental health professional, text “TALK” or “HABLAR” (for Spanish) to 552020.
- **Bookmark www.lakecountyil.gov/coronavirus** for all local updates from the Lake County Health Department.
- **Reminder: These conference calls are held every Thursday.**
 - The key points, chat files, and audio recordings are posted to the Health Department’s website. <https://www.lakecountyil.gov/4428/Conference-Calls>
 - Don’t forget to submit your questions by noon on Tuesdays. Form to submit questions: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/6XYKQHJ>
 - Please encourage others to join the calls so we can keep the community informed.

Policy

- The **2020 Census** is happening now. You can respond online, by phone, or by mail. Citizenship information is not collected. <https://2020census.gov/en/ways-to-respond.html>
- The U.S. Senate approved a **\$480 billion dollar relief package** to provide funding for small businesses that are suffering during the COVID-19 crisis. It is anticipated that the U.S. House of Representatives will approve the bill this week, with the President to sign shortly after.

- The federal CARES act suspended monthly payments, interest, and involuntary collection of **student loans** from federal borrowers. Illinois announced that it is expanding upon this by providing relief to Illinoisans with commercially-owned Federal Family Education Program loans of privately held students loans that are struggling to make payments.
 - Borrowers can access relief options like 90 days of forbearance, waiving fees, ensuring no negative credit reporting, ceasing debt collection lawsuits, and income-based repayment.
 - Students must contact their student loan servicer to identify options appropriate to their situation.
- Illinois has been approved for the **Pandemic EBT program**, which will provide SNAP households in Illinois with roughly \$112 million in additional nutrition benefits for their children. These will be distributed automatically onto link cards. For households that do not receive SNAP benefits, but are eligible for free or reduced-price meals, a simplified application will be available soon, potentially next week on ABE.illinois.gov.
- Essential workers are assured workers compensation benefits during the pandemic through an emergency expansion of **Illinois Workers' Compensation Act**.
 - First responders and front-line workers who are injured or suffer periods of incapacity from exposure to COVID-19 during the state of emergency can presume that the exposure arose out of and in the course of their employment.
https://www2.illinois.gov/sites/iwcc/news/Documents/13APR20-Emergency_Amendment_Only-50IAC9030_70.pdf

Businesses

- The U.S. Senate approved a **\$480 billion dollar relief package** to provide funding for small businesses that are suffering during the COVID-19 crisis. More than \$320 billion is reserved for the Paycheck Protection Program, which provides forgivable loans to small businesses. It is anticipated that the U.S. House of Representatives will approve the bill this week, with the President to sign shortly after.
 - Lake County small businesses are urged to prepare for this opportunity and consider applying for the Paycheck Protection Program as soon as it's available. Further program information, and copies of required forms for application are located on the [Small Business Administration website](#).
- Lake County Partners has a **COVID-19 Informational Resources** page on its website, <https://www.lakecountypartners.com/>
- **The Health Department is working closely with the Office of the Attorney General to address workplace complaints around social distancing.** Anyone who is concerned about safety in their workplace because their employer is not following social distancing guidelines can contact the

OAG Workplace Rights Bureau at (844) 740-5076 or through email workplacerrights@atg.state.il.us to file a complaint.

- **The Health Department continues to update its guidance** for essential businesses in both English and Spanish. <https://www.lakecountyil.gov/4412/Information-for-Specific-Groups>
- Applications for **one-time grants for artists and art organizations** through the Arts for Illinois Relief Fund are **temporarily closed** to allow time for processing communication and additional fundraising. The application will reopen Monday, May 4 at 9:00am. ArtsforIllinois.org.
- Up to date information for the **Illinois Small Business Emergency Loan Fund** is available on the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity website <https://www2.illinois.gov/dceo/SmallBizAssistance/Pages/EmergencySBAIntiatives.aspx>
- **Illinois Helps** is an emergency response system to manage volunteer healthcare providers. Governor Pritzker has urged anyone in the medical field to register. <https://illinoishelps.net/>

Municipalities

- The Office of the Attorney General Workplace Rights Bureau is using its hotline 844-740-5076 and email workplacerrights@atg.state.il.us to receive **complaints of employers failing to abide by the social distancing guidelines** specified in the Executive Order.
- As a local government or special district, you are considered eligible for **FEMA public assistance**, a cost share reimbursement program if you have or may have at least \$3,300 in eligible uninsured Emergency Protective Measure costs.
 - Lake County has a document outlining what types of costs may be reimbursed as part of the program, which can be emergency medical care, distribution of supplies, communications of health and safety information, and overtime costs. https://content.govdelivery.com/attachments/ILLAKE/2020/03/31/file_attachments/1415676/Attachment%20%20-%20COVID-19%20Eligible%20Emergency%20Protective%20Measures.pdf
 - The Lake County Emergency Management has provided guidance on how to apply. https://content.govdelivery.com/attachments/ILLAKE/2020/03/31/file_attachments/1415985/Simplified%20Guidance%20on%20PA%20Application.pdf
- Residents can apply for **public benefit programs** including healthcare (Medicaid), food (SNAP), and cash assistance at ABE, the state's Application for Benefits Eligibility. The state also launched the IDHS *Help is Here* toll-free line at 1-833-2-FIND-HELP to assist with public benefit applications. <https://abe.illinois.gov/abe/access/>
- **Illinois Helps** is an emergency response system to manage volunteer healthcare providers. Governor Pritzker has urged anyone in the medical field to register. <https://illinoishelps.net/>
- The state has extended the **income tax** filing and payment deadline from April 15 to July 15.

- All **Illinois Secretary of State offices and Driver Services facilities** are closed to the public through April 30, 2020. Expiration dates for driver's licenses, identification cards, vehicle registrations and other transactions and document filings will be extended at least 90 days after Driver Services Facilities reopen. Online services are available.
<https://www.cyberdriveillinois.com/home.html>
- The **Real ID** enforcement deadline has been pushed back to October 1, 2021. Residents can delay getting this new form of identification. <https://www.dhs.gov/news/2020/03/26/acting-secretary-chad-wolf-statement-real-id-enforcement-deadline>

Faith-Based Organizations

- **United Way is coordinating volunteer opportunities** during COVID-19. Among the opportunities is an urgent request for sewn cloth mask donations to be distributed to vulnerable populations.
<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeHlujrAxtmB21jNjy1cZ3jbr31k-LFbkbjguB7fKncQpAymA/viewform>

Community Resources

- **211:** If anyone in your community needs assistance finding food, shelter, rent or utility assistance, or other essential services, CALL 211 or TEXT your zip code to 898211 to speak with someone who can help. 211 is available 24/7. <https://211lakecounty.org/>
- To get **general information about coronavirus via text message**, text "COVID19" to 211211.
- United Way of Lake County, Lake County Government, Lake County Community Foundation, and the Lake County Municipal League have joined together to create the **Lake County COVID-19 Community Response Fund** which has already disbursed many grants to community organizations providing relief to residents. <https://www.liveunitedlakecounty.org/covid19/>.
- Mano a Mano has a **COVID-19 Tanda Emergency Fund** to help immigrant families directly, who are often excluded from government benefits. Learn more or donate on their website: <https://mamfrc.org/page-18194>
- **Rental evictions** have been suspended nationwide and a 60-day moratorium for all **evictions and foreclosures** on FHA, Fannie Mae, and Freddie Mac-insured properties began on March 18.
- The Illinois Commerce Commission **suspended disconnections for all electric, natural gas, water and wastewater services**. Late fees will be waived until May 1 or when the crisis is deemed to have passed.
- Individuals co-quarantined or isolated with an abuser can contact the **National Domestic Violence Hotline** 1-800-799-7233, or the Illinois Domestic Violence Hotline at: 1-877-TO END DV or 877-863-6338 (Voice), 1-877-863-6339 (TTY), Chat at thehotline.org.

- Many providers and programs are offering **free or low cost internet** <https://www.digitalinclusion.org/free-low-cost-internet-plans/>.

Questions from the Community

Is the location of a reported case the patient's home, or place where the test occurred such as a hospital?

- Cases are reported based on a person's home residence, not where they have received testing or treatment.

There's been an increase in gun sales and domestic violence with this crisis. How can the Health Department's partners and community members help?

- The Health Department worked with A Safe Place domestic violence shelter to secure hotel housing for their clients to assure they have a safe place to stay during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Please promote the National Domestic Violence Hotline 1-800-799-7233, or the Illinois Domestic Violence Hotline at: 1-877-TO END DV or 877-863-6338 (Voice), 1-877-863-6339 (TTY), Chat at thehotline.org.
- Another concern is the likelihood of suicides since access to a gun is a risk factor. Know the warning signs of suicide and how to reach resources like Lake County's Crisis Care Program (847) 377-8088, or the Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK – learn more at <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>.
- Other ideas circulating at this time are for healthcare providers to screen for abuse during telehealth visits, and some school districts using tablets for remote learning can include applications for connecting with law enforcement or advocates discreetly.

Does the Health Department have any autonomy on implementing serology testing?

- Serology testing, also known as antibody testing, is being conducted by some private entities, but not by the Health Department.
- Serology testing is not scientifically validated and cannot diagnose active infection of COVID-19, which remains the priority of the Health Department.

Many grocery store employees are not wearing masks. Does the Health Department have any influence over this?

- Our environmental health team has been focused on communicating with grocery retailers. They have all been provided the CDC Guidelines. Masks are recommended but not mandatory in many communities, and we continue to educate our businesses on the benefits of masks, proper social distancing, and hygiene.

What percentage of ICU beds and ventilators in Lake County are still available?

- This fluctuates daily. The state has a dashboard where you can check current ICU bed and ventilator capacity: <http://www.dph.illinois.gov/covid19/hospitalization-utilization>