

Lake County Updates

- **As of yesterday, the United States officially surpassed 300,000 total deaths from COVID-19. The U.S. now averages over 200,000 new cases per day.** <https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/>
- **Lake County has had 42,098 confirmed COVID-19 cases, 2,121 probable cases, and 681 deaths. Over 526,000 tests have been administered. Lake County's recovery rate is 97 percent.** <https://covid19response-lakecountyiil.hub.arcgis.com/>
- **The Health Department continues to work closely with long-term care facilities** to prevent the spread of disease among this vulnerable population. Currently we are assisting 62 facilities with 2 or more cases reported. Over the course of the pandemic, over 141 facility outbreaks have resulted in 3,470 cases and 404 deaths.
- After careful review of the CDC's [new options](#) for shortened quarantine, our health department continues **to recommend a full 14-day quarantine for those who are exposed to someone with COVID-19 in Lake County.** The Health Department will reassess the quarantine recommendations after the holidays.
- **Take steps to slow the spread of COVID-19.** Wear a mask, wash your hands often, watch your distance – keeping at least 6 feet apart – and avoid crowds. The more steps you take, the more you are protected against COVID-19.
- **The safest way to celebrate winter holidays is to celebrate at home with the people who live with you.** Staying home is the best way to protect yourself and others. Travel and gatherings with family and friends who do not live with you can increase your chances of getting or spreading COVID-19 or the flu. <https://lakecohealth.org/holidays>
- **IDPH recommends that any residents returning from holiday gatherings get tested for COVID-19.** If a person has symptoms, they should get tested right away. If they do not have symptoms, they should wait 5-7 days after their last day of potential exposure to get tested. Anyone who gets tested should quarantine and not leave home while they wait for their test results.
- **The entire state remains in Tier 3 mitigation.** <https://coronavirus.illinois.gov/s/restore-illinois-mitigation-plan>. In Region 9, our testing positivity rate has decreased to 11.2%, our med-surg bed availability is currently 22.8% and ICU bed availability is 26.8%, and we have seen decreases in hospitalizations in 8 out of the past 10 days. Our region now meets the state's criteria for moving from Tier 3 to Tier 2 mitigation, and we are awaiting news as to the timing of any changes. Daily cases in Illinois have been declining since mid-November. <http://www.dph.illinois.gov/regionmetrics?regionID=9>
- **Lake County continues to be listed as orange 'warning' level on the Illinois Department of Public Health county-level map,** indicating increased COVID-19 risk. We have been at orange warning level since November 6. <http://www.dph.illinois.gov/countymetrics?county=Lake>
- **It is not too late to get your annual flu vaccination.** The CDC recommends **every person over the age of 6 months** get their flu vaccine every year. Visit the Vaccine Finder website to find a flu shot provider near you. <https://www.vaccinefinder.org>

- **On December 11, the FDA authorized the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine for emergency use. The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices met on December 12 and approved the use of the vaccine for individuals 16 years old and older.**
- **Tomorrow, December 17, the FDA will be discussing the application and clinical trial data for the COVID-19 vaccine manufactured by Moderna.**
 - CDC and what you need to know about vaccines: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/index.html>
 - CDC - Benefits of Getting a COVID-19 Vaccine: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/about-vaccines/vaccine-benefits.html>
 - CDC - Busting Myths and Misconceptions about COVID-19 Vaccination: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/about-vaccines/vaccine-myths.html>
 - CDC - Frequently Asked Questions About COVID-19 Vaccinations: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/faq.html>
 - Current status of vaccine candidates (Washington Post) <https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/2020/11/17/covid-vaccines-what-you-need-to-know/?arc404=true>
- **Lake County is expected to receive our first vaccine in the next couple of days. This supply will initially go to our hospitals. The early supply of COVID-19 vaccine will focus on vaccinating our frontline healthcare workers and residents and staff of long-term care facilities as recommended by the CDC.** As more vaccine becomes available, more individuals will have the opportunity to receive the vaccine, in order of priority determined by the CDC.
- **Last week, our Health Department launched the Lake County AllVax Portal, where people can register themselves and their households for COVID-19 vaccination. Registering is free, easy, and secure.** <https://AllVax.lakecohealth.org>
 - In just one week, over 113,000 residents have registered on the portal.
 - By providing basic information and answering a few screening questions, you will be notified when a COVID-19 vaccine is available. Then you will be able to schedule an appointment at a Lake County Health Department vaccination clinic.
 - Residents who need assistance registering can call (847) 377-8130 or email AllVax@lakecountyil.gov.
 - The screening questions used during registration are based on CDC prioritization of populations for COVID-19 vaccination. As priority groups for future vaccination stages are finalized, the portal will be updated, and people will be able to update their information to ensure the right people receive their vaccine at the right time.
 - Lake County's goal is to vaccinate 80% of our population. We ask for your partnership in sharing this important resource and encouraging anyone who lives or works in Lake County to register.

- A FAQ page continues to be updated with common questions about AllVax and COVID-19 vaccines. <https://allvax.lakecohealth.org/s/topic/0TO4W000000hgBUWAY/resident>
- **Make sure you are subscribed to our email newsletters for updates** (English: <http://bit.ly/lccovid-19>, Spanish: <https://bit.ly/lccovid-19-es>).
- **The Health Department has published our first edition of Lake County Health & Wellness magazine** in English and Spanish. It was sent to every residential address in Lake County. It includes easy to understand information about staying healthy during the COVID-19 pandemic, including information on how COVID-19 spreads, isolation and quarantine, caring for your physical and mental health, expert answers to frequently asked questions, community resources, and much more. The magazine is available for free online. Please share this resource with your community.
 - English: https://issuu.com/lakecohealth/docs/health_and_wellness_magazine_english_final
 - Spanish: https://issuu.com/lakecohealth/docs/health_and_wellness_magazine_spanish_final
- **Contact tracing is a critical tool for slowing the spread of COVID-19.** Calls from Lake County contact tracers come from 312-777-1999 and caller ID – IL COVID HELP.
 - **Please do your part; answer the call** and provide our staff with all the information needed. Through these calls and text messages, they ensure that people have information and the necessary support to isolate or quarantine safely.
 - www.lakecountyil.gov/answerthecall
- **LCHD continues its work with two community partnership groups**—Asociacion Comunitaria Latina (ACL) and the African American Community Partnership Group (AACPG) to address COVID-19 disparities along racial and ethnic lines.
 - We are working closely with our partners to develop culturally tailored outreach materials around the vaccine and will be hosting several events that address our communities' unique concerns in the new year.
 - These groups are actively distributing 83,000 PPE kits for community members. If your organization is interested in obtaining kits containing reusable masks, disposable masks, hand sanitizer, and educational materials for your community, please contact Gale Graves at galegraves@waukeganpl.info
 - You can learn more about these groups on their Facebook pages:
 - <https://www.facebook.com/AACPLakeCounty>
 - <https://www.facebook.com/asociacioncomunitarialatinalc>
- Demand for testing remains high in Lake County. **The Community-Based Testing Site at 102 W. Water St., Waukegan is open to everyone with or without symptoms.** The site offers free drive-thru and walk-up testing for those who do not have a vehicle or who use public transportation. The site is open 7 days a week from 8 a.m. until 4 p.m.

- Testing is also available in eastern McHenry County:
 - **Thursday, December 17 from 8 a.m. – 4 p.m., Johnsborg High School (Rear Parking Lot)**
 - **Monday, December 21 from 8 a.m. – 4 p.m., Petersen Park, McHenry**
 - **Wednesday, December 30 from 8 a.m. – 4 p.m., Lippold Park Family Golf Center, Crystal Lake**
- **As a reminder, these conference calls are held the first and third Wednesday of every month.** Our next conference calls are scheduled for January 6 and 20.
 - The key points, chat files, and audio recordings are posted to the Health Department's website. <https://www.lakecountyiil.gov/4428/Conference-Calls>

Policy

- Illinois has extended the **moratorium on evictions through January 11. The moratorium applies only to renters who have earned no more than \$90,000 in annual income, or \$198,000 for joint filers during the calendar year, and are unable to make a full rent or housing payment due to a COVID-19 related hardship. Under the new Executive Order, tenants must complete this declaration and provide it to their landlord to protect themselves from eviction.** <https://df7qosnywqs6g.cloudfront.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Tenant-Declaration-Forms-12.12.20.pdf>
- Visit www.lakecountyiil.gov/forward to view how **\$121 million in CARES Act funding** is being distributed throughout the County.

Businesses

- In line with guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Lake County Health Department recommends that **employers should not require a negative test for an employee to return to work if that employee previously tested positive for COVID-19.** This is because a person may continue to test positive for the virus for months after their infectious period, even though they are no longer contagious.
 - Individuals with COVID-19 or their close contacts who speak with a Health Department Contact Tracer can choose to enroll in a daily health assessment which will provide a release from isolation or quarantine letter from IDPH.
- To date, more than \$16 million dollars has been distributed to just over 1,200 local small businesses as part of the **Lake County Small Business Assistance Grants Program.** Grant awards ranged from \$485 to a maximum of \$30,000. For a list of the local businesses that have received grants, visit www.lakecountyiil.gov/forward.
- **Please continue to use the Health Department form for workplaces and facilities to use to report cases of COVID-19 and close contacts.** <https://redcap.dph.illinois.gov/surveys/?s=NHECLHEHFP>

- Information submitted is confidential and stored in a secure system. A member of our Communicable Disease team will follow up to provide guidance and perform contact tracing, as necessary.
- **Thank you, businesses, for all you are doing to keep your staff and customers safe during the pandemic.** This is no easy task, and we are grateful for your efforts and for following public health guidance. **If you have questions about how to operate safely, or to report a business-related concern, please call the Health Department's Environmental Health division at (847) 377-8020.**
- The Health Department has a new **Lake County Businesses email subscription list** for sending updates about upcoming conference calls and other important news. You can also provide your phone number to receive text notifications. Invite your colleagues or anyone else who may be interested to sign up as well. <https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/ILLAKE/signup/18495>
- **The Illinois Department for Economic Opportunity (DCEO) has a variety of small business and community relief programs.** For more information on programs available for businesses and communities, please visit DCEO website: <https://www2.illinois.gov/dceo/Pages/default.aspx>
- **ComEd is offering a new bill assistance program to help local small businesses** facing financial difficulties as a result of COVID-19. Eligible small business customers that are past due on their energy bills can receive a one-time grant equal to 30 percent of their total ComEd balance (up to \$1,000) for a limited time. Customers whose electric service has not been disconnected can then set up their remaining balance due on a payment plan of up to six months. <http://ComEd.com/SmallBizAssistance>
- **Additional business resources:**
 - **Lake County Health Department** <https://www.lakecountyiil.gov/4412/Community-Guidance-and-Resources>
 - **Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity** <https://dceocovid19resources.com/for-businesses/>
 - **Lake County Partners** <https://www.lakecountypartners.com/>
 - **Small Business Administration** <https://www.sba.gov/>
- **If you have concerns that your employer is not allowing for safe social distancing or that it is not maintaining a safe and sanitary work environment** to minimize the risk of spread of COVID-19, please contact the Workplace Rights Bureau of the Illinois Attorney General's Office at 844-740-5076 or workplacerrights@atg.state.il.us.

Municipalities

- **Many municipalities have asked what they can do to assist with vaccine dispensing. Here are a couple items that we are looking for:**
 - **If you have a public works drive through building** that can be used for a drive through vaccine clinic, please let me know. We will come out and assess if it can be used.

- **IDPH is always looking for mobile testing sites. These can continue to operate in cold weather provided it is not high winds and rain.** Please contact us if you could provide parking lot space or help coordinate a location in your community for COVID-19 testing. pcorn@lakecountyiil.gov
- Please continue to use and promote the Health Department's **form for schools, workplaces, and facilities to use to report cases of COVID-19 and close contacts.** <https://redcap.dph.illinois.gov/surveys/?s=NHECLHEHFP>
 - Information submitted is confidential and stored in a secure system. A member of our Communicable Disease team will follow up to provide guidance and perform contact tracing, as necessary.
- **To provide more rapid COVID-19 diagnostic testing, the Health Department is working with IDPH to distribute BinaxNOW™ COVID-19 Antigen Card tests to appropriate entities within our community.**
 - BinaxNOW™ COVID-19 Antigen Card tests are antigen tests purchased by the federal government and disseminated to states for distribution. These tests provide more rapid results than PCR diagnostic tests.
 - Entities that are prioritized include schools, higher institutions of learning, correctional facilities, long-term care facilities, federally qualified health centers, essential/critical infrastructure workers, and homeless service providers.
 - <https://www.lakecountyiil.gov/DocumentCenter/View/37198/Guidance-for-Dissemination-of-BinaxNow-Tests-PDF>
- **You play a vital role in keeping your community informed about COVID-19.** Please utilize content from the Health Department's email newsletter in your own communications, promote sign-ups to your distribution lists, and share the Health Department's social media content whenever possible. **Thank you** for all you are doing to keep our communities safe!

Faith-Based Organizations

- To protect the health and safety of faith leaders, staff, congregants and visitors, **religious organizations and houses of worship are strongly encouraged to follow guidance from the Illinois Department of Public Health.** The safest practices for religious organizations are to provide services online, in a drive-in format, or outdoors with social distancing and mask wearing, and to limit in-person services to 10 people. <https://www.dph.illinois.gov/covid19/community-guidance/places-worship-guidance#:~:text=Some%20best%20practices%20include%3A%20Congregants%20who%20are%20living%20together%20sit,virus%20by%20projecting%20respiratory%20droplets.>
- The state also updated **funeral home guidance**, which includes information for conducting funeral services or visitations. <https://www.dph.illinois.gov/covid19/community-guidance/funeral-homes>

- **Lake County Health Department Worshipping Together Safely guide has been updated:**
<https://www.lakecountyiil.gov/DocumentCenter/View/36546/Worshipping-Together-Safely---English>
- **Please encourage everyone to be vigilant about following the 3Ws** if you do host any in-person events or services. Keeping a list of attendees and phone numbers can be helpful if attendees are exposed to someone with COVID-19.
- **The state reports COVID-19 outbreak locations on its website.** Outbreaks are defined as 5 or more cases linked to a common location. Region 9 has had two outbreaks in religious locations since July. <http://www.dph.illinois.gov/covid19/outbreak-locations?regionID=0&rPeriod=1>
- The state also shared data on potential exposure locations, based on information shared by people diagnosed with COVID-19. **These should be interpreted as locations where COVID-19 exposure *may* have occurred, not definitive exposure locations.**
 - In Region 9, there have been 43 cases of COVID-19 where a potential exposure location was a place of worship within the past 30 days.
<http://www.dph.illinois.gov/covid19/location-exposure?regionID=9>
- **Emily Gelber-Maturo is the Health Department's dedicated liaison for faith communities during COVID-19.** You can reach her by emailing egelber@lakecountyiil.gov.
- Please continue to utilize the **Health Department's form for schools, workplaces, and facilities to use to report cases of COVID-19 and close contacts.**
<https://redcap.dph.illinois.gov/surveys/?s=NHECLHEHFP>
 - Information submitted is confidential and stored in a secure system. A member of our Communicable Disease team will follow up to provide guidance and perform contact tracing, as necessary.
- Make sure you are signed up for our **Lake County Faith Leaders email subscription list.** You can also provide your phone number to receive text notifications. Invite your colleagues or anyone else who may be interested to sign up as well.
<https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/ILLAKE/signup/18498>
- **Guidelines for Places of Worship are available on the IDPH website –**
<http://www.dph.illinois.gov/covid19/community-guidance/places-worship-guidance>
- **The CDC has a webpage dedicated to communities of faith –**
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/index.html>

Community Resources

- Anyone needing assistance finding food, shelter, rent or utility assistance, or other essential services can CALL 211 or TEXT your zip code to 898211 to speak with someone who can help. **211 is available 24/7.** <https://211lakecounty.org/>. This includes connecting to:
 - **Lake County CATCH:** 2 weeks worth of free meals delivered to families who have to stay home due to quarantine or isolation

- **Lake County CHRP** (Coronavirus Housing Relief Program): rental assistance for families experiencing financial hardship due to COVID-19
<https://www.lakecountyl.gov/4476/Lake-County-COVID-Housing-Relief-Program>
- **Many more community resources are available for those in need.** Visit <https://www.lakecountyl.gov/4414/How-to-Get-Help> for an updated list.
- **If you are looking for opportunities to help others during this time,** please visit <https://www.lakecountyl.gov/4413/How-You-Can-Help>