

Lake County Updates

- **Cases, hospitalizations, and deaths from COVID-19 are beginning to fall in the United States after peaking in January.** As of yesterday, over 26 million COVID-19 cases and 445,000 deaths have been reported. The pace of vaccinations has accelerated to more than a million shots a day. <https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/>
- **Lake County has had 52,276 confirmed COVID-19 cases, 4,173 probable cases, and 865 deaths.** Over 690,000 tests have been administered. **Lake County's recovery rate is 97.9 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 74 facilities with 2 or more cases reported. Over the course of the pandemic, outbreaks in long-term care facilities have resulted in 4,298 cases and 490 deaths.
- **The emergence of new variants of COVID-19 across the world and in the Chicago region underscores the importance of following public health strategies to limit the spread of the virus.** These variants seem to spread more easily and quickly than other variants, which may lead to more cases of COVID-19. An increase in the number of cases will put more strain on healthcare resources, lead to more hospitalizations, and potentially more deaths. So far, studies suggest that the currently available vaccines will be effective against these new strains. More studies are underway.
 - New COVID-19 Variants (CDC): <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/transmission/variant.html>
- **Effective today, Region 9 has moved back into Phase 4 of the Restore Illinois Plan, and Tier 1 mitigations have been removed.** Under Phase 4 guidelines:
 - Bars and restaurants can provide indoor service for parties of up to 10 people.
 - Retail, service counters, and personal care can operate at 50% occupancy.
 - Indoor recreation facilities (e.g., bowling alleys, skating rinks) can reopen at the lesser of 50 customers or 50% capacity, but indoor playgrounds and trampoline parks should remain closed.
 - Museums can operate at 25% occupancy, and guided tours should be limited to 50 or fewer people per group.
 - Meetings and social events are limited to the lesser of 50 people or 50% room capacity.
 - Complete Phase 4 guidelines can be found on the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity website.
 - **DCEO guidelines for businesses:** <https://dceocovid19resources.com/restore-illinois/restore-illinois-phase-4/>

- **In Region 9**, our testing positivity rate is 6.2% as of January 31, our lowest rate since October 12. Our ICU bed capacity has improved to 32% availability, and COVID-19 hospitalizations have decreased in 25 of the past 30 days.
 - <http://www.dph.illinois.gov/regionmetrics?regionID=9>
- **Lake County has moved again into the blue ‘stable’ level on the Illinois Department of Public Health county-level risk map**, indicating that COVID-19 risk is stabilizing. Rates of new cases indicate that Lake County continues to have ‘substantial community transmission’ of COVID-19. <http://www.dph.illinois.gov/countymetrics?county=Lake>
- **Continue to be vigilant to prevent 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.
- **Today we will exceed at total of 40,000 doses of the COVID-19 vaccine administered in Lake County.** Illinois vaccination data: <http://www.dph.illinois.gov/covid19/vaccinedata?county=Lake>
- **The Health Department continues to operate its mass vaccination clinic at the Lake County Fairgrounds.** Both Pfizer and Moderna vaccines are being administered **by appointment only** through the AllVax system. The Health Department continues to expand daily vaccination capacity at this site and is continuing to vaccinate Phase 1a healthcare workers and staff of long-term care facilities and congregate care settings. <https://www.lakecountyl.gov/vaccine>
 - Pfizer-BioNTech FDA Fact Sheet: <https://www.fda.gov/media/144414/download>
 - Moderna FDA Fact Sheet: <https://www.fda.gov/media/144638/download>
- **As of January 25, Lake County hospitals, healthcare providers, pharmacies, and other partners began giving vaccines to seniors ages 65+ in Phase 1b on a limited basis.** This week, partner points of dispensing (PODs) at two Lake County schools are beginning vaccinations to PreK-12th grade staff by appointment through AllVax. Large manufacturers also began vaccinating their ages 65+ employees, followed by manufacturing frontline workers. Phase 1b will continue for several months, and even if you qualify for a vaccine in this phase, it may take several weeks before an appointment is available to you.
- **The State has set up a Vaccine Locator website** where residents can search for vaccine providers. Due to limited vaccine supply, it is difficult to get an appointment at these locations. <https://coronavirus.illinois.gov/s/vaccination-location>
- **There will be overlap between the phases of vaccinations.** As demand in Phase 1a slows down, more appointments will be available to people in Phase 1b.
 - Those in Phase 1b include:
 - Seniors ages 65 and older.
 - Frontline essential workers (first responders, teachers and support staff, public transit employees, grocery store staff, and daycare workers).
 - People working in food and agriculture, manufacturing, corrections, and the US Postal Service.

- Phase 1c is not yet finalized in the Illinois vaccination plan. It may include:
 - Persons aged 16–64 with high-risk medical conditions.
 - Other essential workers.
- Illinois vaccination FAQs: <http://www.dph.illinois.gov/covid19/vaccine-faq>
- Lake County COVID-19 Vaccine web page: <https://www.lakecountyil.gov/vaccine>
- **Over 300,000 people have registered on the Lake County AllVax Portal**, our online platform where you can register yourself and your household for COVID-19 vaccination. Registering is free, easy, and secure. <https://AllVax.lakecohealth.org>. Residents who need assistance registering can call (847) 377-8130 or email AllVax@lakecountyil.gov. Our call and email volume is extremely high, and our team is working diligently to return calls and emails. The Health Department is also hiring additional staff to work in the call center.
 - This week the AllVax system was updated to allow frontline essential workers eligible in Phase 1b to select their profession.
 - A new option was also added where registrants can consent to the Lake County Health Department sending information to COVID-19 vaccination partners, giving residents access to more locations providing vaccines in Lake County as vaccine supply increases.
 - The AllVax system does not email everyone in the current phase at the same time. Three things must happen for you to receive the scheduling email:
 1. You must be registered in the AllVax system.
 2. You must be eligible to receive your vaccine in the CURRENT phase of vaccinations. You will not receive an email to schedule before your phase begins.
 3. The Health Department must receive a shipment of vaccines and have appointments available.
 - Please rest assured, everyone will be able to get the vaccine, but this will take 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/0TO4W000000hqBUWAY/resident>
- **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.
 - **Both groups will be hosting culturally tailored Town Halls featuring medical professionals of color for their communities. Please help us promote these events:**
 - AACPG: Thursday, Feb 11 at 6 p.m. Hosted on Facebook live <https://www.facebook.com/AACPLakeCounty>
 - ACL: Wednesday, Feb 17 at 5:30 p.m. Hosted in Spanish on Zoom.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88078003727>

- You can learn more about these groups on their Facebook pages:
 - <https://www.facebook.com/AACPLakeCounty>
 - <https://www.facebook.com/asociacioncomunitarialatinalc>
- **Community organizations, municipalities, businesses, and faith centers are invited to help support COVID-19 vaccination across Lake County by becoming a Community Health Ambassador.**
 - Community Health Ambassadors will receive step-by-step registration guidance, answers to COVID-19 FAQs that they can relay to their communities, promotional materials, and recognition for the important role they play in restoring Lake County communities.
 - We already have over 100 individuals representing over 50 community organizations serving as Community Health Ambassadors! Join the team.
 - Sign up here: https://lchd.iad1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_e3BOCd49aly8xFz
- As a reminder, these conference calls are held the first and third Wednesday of every month. Our next conference calls are scheduled for February 17 and March 3.
 - The key points, chat files, and audio recordings are posted to the Health Department's website. <https://www.lakecountyl.gov/4428/Conference-Calls>
- **Make sure you are subscribed to our email newsletters for updates** (English: <https://bit.ly/lccovid-19>, Spanish: <https://bit.ly/lccovid-19-es>).

Policy

- **The CDC has implemented a number of actions related to COVID-19 response, including extending the federal eviction moratorium through March of 2021, and mandating mask wearing on public transportation.**
- **A special enrollment period for health insurance, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, will begin on February 15.** People can go to healthcare.gov to find out more about their health insurance options. <https://healthcare.gov>
- **Illinois has extended the moratorium on evictions through February 6, 2021.** The moratorium applies only to renters who are unable to make a full rent or housing payment due to a COVID-19 related hardship. Income limits apply. 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.lakecountyl.gov/forward to view how **\$121 million in CARES Act funding** is being distributed throughout the County.

Businesses

- In Phase 1b of vaccination for COVID-19, frontline essential workers and people age 65 and older are eligible for vaccination. **Vaccine supply remains limited, but as it becomes available we believe that employer Points of Dispensing (PODs) will play a critical role in expanding vaccination capacity to our Lake County community.** Businesses can fill out an online form to express interest in serving as an employer POD location. Our staff will then assess interest with vaccine and vaccinator availability and phase eligibility. Thank you for considering being a part of this historical effort to slow the spread of COVID-19.
 - Employer Closed POD Interest Form:
https://lchd.iad1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6KC3sDCpJlIz714
- **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 Paycheck Protection Program reopened on January 11. Get more information on eligibility and how to apply on the Small Business Administration website. [Paycheck Protection Program \(sba.gov\)](https://www.sba.gov)
- 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.lakecountyil.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.
- 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.lakecountyil.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:**
 - Currently the Lake County Fairgrounds vaccination site is providing 500+ vaccinations a day. It takes 60 people every day to run that site. Two PODS open this week for teachers and staff and the school districts are taking on that full responsibility.
 - The LCHD is working with other business partners for closed PODS to vaccinate their essential front-line workers identified in 1b. We know that pharmacies will soon be supplied with additional vaccine to help 1b and beyond, and hospitals are already working to vaccinate their patient populations.
 - It is our intention to stand up additional open PODS in the very near future as vaccine supply increases. We need the support of the municipalities and fire districts on this call, to be part of the solution with support staff, paramedics, etc. when the time comes.
 - **If you have a public works building** that can be used for a drive through vaccine clinic, please let us know. We will come out and assess if it can be used for a vaccination site.
 - **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@lakecountyil.gov

- **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!
- 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.

Faith-Based Organizations

- **Many individuals are asking about when they will be able to get the COVID-19 vaccine. Please let your congregations know to sign up for AllVax, which will notify people when there is a vaccine and appointment available. Signing up does not obligate anyone to get a vaccine, but it will let them know when they would be eligible for an appointment.**
<https://AllVax.lakecohealth.org>.
- **Clergy are expected to be part of 1c as essential workers. That phase is not finalized yet. We will follow IDPH and CDC guidelines when we get to that phase.**
- **Illinois Catholic bishops joined U.S. bishops' statement on COVID-19 vaccines, which says Moderna and Pfizer vaccines are morally acceptable,** and urges Catholics to read a document on Moral Considerations Regarding the COVID-19 Vaccine.
 - English Statement: [COVID-19Vaccines_Dec182020FINAL.pdf \(ilcatholic.org\)](#)
 - Spanish Statement: [COVID-19Vaccines_Dec182020FINAL_SPANISH.pdf \(ilcatholic.org\)](#)
- 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.lakecountyil.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 (2 or more cases in congregate settings like long-term care facilities and daycares). 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.** <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@lakecountyl.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

- **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, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- **A mobile testing site managed by the Illinois Department of Public Health will be at the Mundelein Metra Station tomorrow,** February 4, 8 a.m. - 4p.m. (205 N. Archer Ave., Mundelein, IL) <https://www.lakecountyl.gov/4435>
- 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:

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- **Lake County CATCH:** 2 weeks of free meals delivered to families who have to stay home due to quarantine or isolation
- **Lake County CHR**P (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>