

Lake County Updates

- **Cases, hospitalizations, and deaths from COVID-19 have continued to fall in the United States after peaking in January.** As of yesterday, over 27.5 million COVID-19 cases and 485,070 deaths have been reported. The pace of vaccinations has accelerated to more than a million shots a day, with over 55 million administered total. <https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/>
- **Lake County has had 53,840 confirmed COVID-19 cases, 4,462 probable cases, and 908 deaths.** Over 694,000 tests have been administered. **Lake County's recovery rate is 98.1 percent.** <https://covid19response-lakecountyil.hub.arcgis.com/>
- **The first case of the B.1.1.7 (United Kingdom) variant of COVID-19 was identified in Lake County on February 5, 2021.** The emergence of new variants of COVID-19 across the world and in Lake County 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. Studies on the effectiveness of vaccines against the new strains are ongoing.
 - New COVID-19 Variants (CDC): <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/transmission/variant.html>
- **In Region 9, our testing positivity rate is 4.4% as of February 13, our lowest rate since late July.** Our ICU bed capacity has improved to 35% availability, and COVID-19 hospitalizations have decreased in 28 of the past 30 days.
 - <http://www.dph.illinois.gov/regionmetrics?regionID=9>
 - **DCEO guidelines for businesses:** <https://dceocovid19resources.com/restore-illinois/restore-illinois-phase-4/>
- **Lake County continues to be in the blue 'stable' level on the Illinois Department of Public Health county-level risk map,** however, 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.
- **In total, over 81,000 doses of the COVID-19 vaccine have been administered to Lake County residents.** 36.4% of all doses administered among Lake County residents are in those ages 65 and older. This means 25.86% of our 65 and older population have received at least one dose.
 - Vaccination data: <http://www.dph.illinois.gov/covid19/vaccinedata?county=Lake>
- **Vaccine supply continues to be limited.** Since December, the Lake County Health Department has received less than 60,000 doses of the vaccine, which is only enough to

vaccinate about 4 percent of our population. Demand far outpaces supply. **Please be patient as we wait for vaccine supply to increase.**

- In order to fully vaccinate 80% of our population (about 560,000 residents), the Health Department would need 1.12 million doses of vaccine. To accomplish this in 6 months, we would need 43,000 doses per week. Our average doses received since December is about 6,400 doses per week.
- With improved vaccine supply and additional vaccinators, we want to average at least 6,000 doses of vaccine administered per day. Currently 3,440 doses are being administered per day among Lake County residents, on a 7-day rolling average.
- When the Health Department receives shipments of vaccine, doses are allocated to appointments for first and second doses at our mass vaccination site, to hospitals, healthcare providers, pharmacies, and community vaccination partners. The Health Department has ultracold storage, so vaccination partners who do not have this capability use our storage to hold doses until they are ready to be thawed and administered. While these may show as “inventory”, they are allocated as soon as they arrive and are being used rapidly each week.
- **The Health Department continues to operate its mass vaccination clinic at the Lake County Fairgrounds by appointment only through the AllVax system.** The Health Department is continuing to vaccinate Phase 1a and this week began adding appointments for people ages 65 and older eligible in Phase 1b. Today and tomorrow there are 750 appointments per day, and Saturday we will increase that to 850 appointments per day. As staffing and vaccine supply permits, additional days each week will be added.
<https://www.lakecountyiil.gov/vaccine>
- **Phase 1a and 1b vaccinations are continuing, and we have planned for this overlap in phases.** 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.
 - Closed points of dispensing (PODs) at two Lake County schools have been vaccinating PreK-12th grade staff by appointment through AllVax. **Please note, these closed PODs are limited to staff of PreK-12 school settings, not tutoring centers or daycares.**
 - Large manufacturers continue vaccinating their ages 65+ employees and frontline workers.
- **Last week we launched our virtual application, streamlined our volunteer on-boarding process, and launched our volunteer website** (<http://lakecountyiil.gov/volunteer>) where members of our community can find information on the roles available to volunteer, get answers to frequently asked questions, and apply to be part of the effort.
 - Through our simplified process, volunteers submit confidentiality agreements, complete appropriate training for their role, and upload the required credentials within their virtual application. Once complete, our logistics team reviews the application to ensure all parts have been completed appropriately, follows up with

the volunteer to collect missing items if needed, and then connects them with our scheduling team to get added to our volunteer schedule.

- **Our Health Department encourages people to explore their options for COVID-19 vaccination and take the first available appointment if they are eligible.** There are four ways to access the vaccine:
 - Registering and being notified of appointment availability in the AllVax system; <https://allvax.lakecohealth.org>;
 - Using the State’s Vaccine Locator website that lists pharmacies and other public sites; <https://coronavirus.illinois.gov/s/vaccination-location>;
 - Checking with their health system (i.e. hospital system or healthcare provider group) for registration and availability – most systems are reaching out to their existing patients and cannot accommodate people calling to inquire about appointments at this time; and
 - Community vaccination sites are opening and are being listed on our website as they become available – <https://www.lakecountyyil.gov/vaccine>.
 - Appointments are extremely limited.
- **Last week, Governor Pritzker announced that effective February 25, Phase 1b in Illinois will be expanded to include people with high-risk medical conditions and those with disabilities. Due to the current limitations in vaccine supply, Lake County will not be adopting this expansion of Phase 1b.**
 - Illinois Vaccination Plan 6.0: <http://www.dph.illinois.gov/sites/default/files/COVID19/IL%20COVID-19%20Vaccination%20Plan%20V6.pdf>
 - Our Health Department’s goal is to get as many people vaccinated as quickly and efficiently as possible. Our greatest challenge continues to be the very limited supply of vaccine we are receiving. While we are making progress every day with vaccinating people in Phase 1a and 1b, at this time we are not being supplied with enough doses to expand eligibility in these phases.
 - Expanding Phase 1b in Lake County would result in our healthcare providers, seniors, frontline essential workers facing greater difficulty in getting vaccinated.
 - Pharmacies and other entities that receive vaccine supply of their own (separate from the Lake County Health Department’s supply) may choose to follow the expanded guidelines of the State.
- **Over 332,000 people have registered on the Lake County AllVax Portal**, our online platform where you can register yourself and your household for COVID-19 vaccination. <https://AllVax.lakecohealth.org>. Residents who need assistance registering can call (847) 377-8130 or email AllVax@lakecountyyil.gov. This week 20 new full-time staff started at our call center to assist the community in registration, especially those without computer or internet access.

- We encourage registrants to select the option consenting 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.
- A FAQ page continues to be updated with common questions about AllVax and COVID-19 vaccines.
<https://allvax.lakecohealth.org/s/topic/0TO4W000000hqBUWAY/resident>
- **Quarantine:** Our Health Department has reviewed [CDC's options](#) for shortened quarantine, along with local COVID-19 trends, and the socioeconomic and mental health impact to our community. We continue to recommend that close contacts to a COVID-19 case *ideally* complete a 14-day quarantine period. However, effective February 8, 2021, a shortened 10-day quarantine period is acceptable if the person exposed to COVID-19 has NOT developed symptoms.
 - If a person with no symptoms wishes to get a COVID-19 test, a RT-PCR test should be given at least 5–7 days after the date they were exposed to COVID-19. Even with a negative test, the person must still complete the minimum 10-day quarantine period.
 - In both options, a person in quarantine must monitor symptoms daily and continue wearing a mask through Day 14. If symptoms develop, the person in quarantine should get a COVID-19 test as soon as possible. If the test is positive, a person should isolate at home for 10 days from the date symptoms start. If symptoms persist despite a negative test, please contact your medical provider.
 - The Lake County Health Department continues to recommend only 14-day quarantine periods in high-risk, congregate settings. This includes settings such as long-term care facilities, correctional and detention facilities, group homes, student housing, daycares, and other settings where social distancing may be difficult. Shorter quarantine options are less effective at preventing COVID-19 transmission in these settings. Even a small increased risk of transmission could result in many new infections.
- On February 4, 2021, Johnson & Johnson (J&J) applied for Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) for its Janssen COVID-19 vaccine candidate. The FDA's Advisory Committee will be meeting on February 26, 2021 to review the clinical trial data.
 - The J&J COVID-19 vaccine is a single-dose vaccine that can be stored at refrigerated temperatures.
 - J&J's vaccine has been studied against emerging strains (including the South Africa variant) showing protection against severe disease across geographies, ages, and multiple virus variant strains.
 - The vaccine is overall 85% effective in preventing severe disease and 100% protection against COVID-19 related hospitalization and death.

- **Wearing a mask reduces the spread of COVID-19.** A recent report from the CDC indicates that the fit of the mask is crucial in preventing exposure.
 - **Make sure your mask fits snugly against your face.** Gaps can let air with respiratory droplets leak in and out around the edges of the mask.
 - Maximize your mask fit by putting a cloth mask over a medical mask or knotting the ear loops of a medical mask.
 - Other alternatives include using a mask filter or using a nylon covering over your mask.
 - **Pick a mask with layers to keep your respiratory droplets in and others' out.** A mask with layers will stop more respiratory droplets getting inside your mask or escaping from your mask if you are sick.
 - Read the report at <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/70/wr/mm7007e1.htm>
 - CDC: Improve How Your Mask Protects You <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/effective-masks.html>

- **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 have organized culturally tailored Town Halls featuring medical professionals of color for their communities.**
 - The AACPG town hall from February 11 recording can be watched on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/AACPGLakeCounty>
 - And the ACL town hall is this evening: 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/AACPGLakeCounty>
 - <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 strongly encourage faith leaders to apply!**

- We already have over 125 individuals representing over 60 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 March 3 and 17.
 - The key points, chat files, and audio recordings are posted to the Health Department's website. <https://www.lakecountyil.gov/4428/Conference-Calls>
- **Make sure you are subscribed to our email newsletters for updates** (English: <http://bit.ly/lccovid-19>, Spanish: <https://bit.ly/lccovid-19-es>).

Policy

- **A special enrollment period for health insurance, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, began on February 15 and will end on May 15th.** 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 March 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>
- **The President has extended a ban on housing foreclosures (federally guaranteed mortgages) to June 30 to help homeowners struggling during the pandemic (was previously March 31). Federal moratorium for evictions of rental tenants remains through March 31.**

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 Website, including the questionnaire: <https://www.lakecountyil.gov/4521/COVID-19-Vaccine#employers>
- 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 and the final grant report, visit www.lakecountyil.gov/forward.

- **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 \(sba.gov\)](#)
- 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.
- **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>
- **ComEd is offering a 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.lakecountyyil.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

- **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

- **Please reach out to seniors in your congregation about vaccines- know that it is taking time to get appointments, and make sure that people are signed up for AllVax.**
- **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 of 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 (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@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

- **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 in Lake County this week:**

Thursday, February 18, 1 p.m. – 7 p.m.

Cristo Rey St. Martin College Prep Parking Lot
3106 Belvidere Rd., Waukegan

Friday, February 19, 8 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Highland Park Country Club
1201 Park Ave. W., Highland Park

- A list of **warming centers** across Lake County can be found online at www.lakecountyil.gov.
- 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/>.
- **Many more community resources are available for those in need.** Visit <https://www.lakecountyil.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.lakecountyil.gov/4413/How-You-Can-Help>