

## Lake County Updates

- **Almost a year ago, the COVID-19 pandemic started affecting our communities.** The first COVID-19 case was reported in Lake County on March 11, 2020. Lake County has had 55,057 confirmed COVID-19 cases and 922 deaths. Over 800,000 tests have been administered. Lake County's recovery rate is 98.2 percent. <https://covid19response-lakecountyiil.hub.arcgis.com/>
- **There has been a six-week downward trend in cases in the United States.** That said, cases in the country are leveling off at higher levels than were seen in the first wave of the pandemic. As of yesterday, over 28 million COVID-19 cases and 513,000 deaths have been reported. A record high of 2.47 million vaccine doses were administered on February 26, bringing the current U.S. total to over 78 million doses. <https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/>
- **CDC is expanding its tracking of variants of SARS-CoV-2, and the number of variants reported will likely increase as more specimens are sequenced and the variants continue to circulate.** The first case of the B.1.1.7 (United Kingdom) variant of COVID-19 was identified in Lake County on February 5, 2021, and we have seen additional cases since. 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>
- **Continue to be vigilant to prevent the spread of COVID-19, even after vaccination.** 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 protect yourself and others from COVID-19.
  - **The fit of your mask matters.** Make sure your mask fits snugly against your face and pick a mask with layers to keep your respiratory droplets in and others' out.
  - CDC: Improve How Your Mask Protects You <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/effective-masks.html>
- **In Region 9, our testing positivity rate is 3.4% as of February 27, our lowest rate since late July.** Our ICU bed capacity has been steady at 31% availability, and there have been no increases in COVID-19 hospitalizations in the past 30 days. Lake County's testing positivity rate decreased to 2.9%, the lowest rate since July 1.
  - <http://www.dph.illinois.gov/regionmetrics?regionID=9>
  - **DCEO guidelines for businesses:** <https://dceocovid19resources.com/restore-illinois/restore-illinois-phase-4/>
- **A federal mass vaccination site will open at the United Center in Chicago on March 9.** The site will vaccinate 6,000 people per day. Lake County residents who are eligible can get vaccinated at

this site. An exclusive appointment registration for seniors 65+ opens March 4 at 8:30 a.m. General registration for Phase 1b+ will open Sunday, March 7 at 4:00 pm.

- To register, go to [zocdoc.com/vaccine](https://zocdoc.com/vaccine). <https://zocdoc.com/vaccine>. If you cannot access the website, call (312) 746-4835. On Thursday, March 4 the hotline will open at 8:30 a.m. This hotline is open Monday – Saturday, 8:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m. and Sunday 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
- The United Center vaccination site is by appointment only. Appointments are walk-up only. A drive thru option will be available later in the month.
- <https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/sites/covid19-vaccine/home/united-center.html>
- **In total, over 127,000 doses of the COVID-19 vaccine have been administered to Lake County residents.** Over 35,000 of our residents, or 5.06% of our population, are fully vaccinated. Over 50,000 doses administered among Lake County residents are in those ages 65 and older. Nearly 40% of our 65 and older population have received at least one dose. Our county is averaging 3,991 doses administered daily on a 7-day rolling average.
  - Vaccination data: <http://www.dph.illinois.gov/covid19/vaccinedata?county=Lake>
- **Our vaccination partners continue to assist us in vaccinating seniors, healthcare workers, Pre-K through 12th grade staff, and manufacturing employees. Vaccinations of daycare workers began this week.**
- **We continue to increase vaccinations at our Lake County Fairgrounds mass vaccination site.** Daily vaccinations at the site surpassed 1,000 as of February 27. This includes healthcare workers and others eligible in Phase 1a, as well as seniors ages 65 and older, and first responders. Starting next week, the site will operate 6 days a week.
- **Vaccine supply continues to be limited.** We expect our vaccine supply to improve toward the end of March, and more appointments first doses will be available. Demand far outpaces supply. **Please be patient as we wait for vaccine supply to increase.**
- **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>. Remember that you can opt-in and consent to allow the Health Department to securely share your registration information with local vaccination partners. This option gives you more access to partnering community vaccination sites that open as vaccine supply increases;
  - 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 very limited.
- **On February 25, Phase 1b in Illinois 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, called “Phase 1b plus.”**
  - Pharmacies and other entities that receive vaccine supply of their own (separate from the Lake County Health Department’s supply) are free to follow the expanded guidelines of the State.
  - Per CDC recommendations, we will look to move in to the "Phase 1b plus" group when 60-70% of persons within the current phase are vaccinated or when supply of vaccines exceeds demand in the current phase.
- **We are grateful to our community for the overwhelming interest in volunteering to assist with mass vaccination. Thank you.** Since moving to our virtual application, we've received over 1000 applications to assist at our mass vaccination sites, with nearly 400 applications submitted within the last 7 days. **Our largest need continues to be medical volunteers who can assist with vaccination and medical observation efforts.** These include, but are not limited to, MD's, RNs, Dentists, Physician's Assistants, and Pharmacists. To learn about available roles, get answers to frequently asked questions, and apply to be part of the effort visit our Volunteer web page. <https://lakecountyyil.gov/volunteer>
- **Over 355,000 people have registered on the Lake County AllVax Portal.** Residents who need assistance registering can call (847) 377-8130 or email [AllVax@lakecountyyil.gov](mailto:AllVax@lakecountyyil.gov). <https://AllVax.lakecohealth.org>
  - The call center hours are Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Recently, additional volunteers have been added to take calls from Lake County residents age 65 and older during special senior hours:
    - Tuesdays: Noon to 3 p.m.
    - Thursdays: 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.
    - Fridays: Noon to 3 p.m.
- **On February 27, the Johnson & Johnson/Janssen Biotech COVID-19 vaccine received emergency use authorization (EUA) from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for use in individuals age 18 and older.** This is the third COVID-19 vaccine authorized in the United States. This vaccine is another important tool in our toolbox to vaccinate as many people as possible, as quickly as possible.
  - The vaccine is an adenovirus vectored vaccine that has been shown to be highly effective in preventing symptomatic COVID-19 disease. It was 100% effective during clinical trials in preventing COVID-19 related hospitalizations and deaths.
  - As a one-dose vaccine, people do not have to return for a second dose to be protected.

- The most commonly reported side effects were pain at the injection site, headache, fatigue, muscle aches and nausea. Most of these side effects occurred within 1-2 days following vaccination and were mild to moderate in severity.
- This 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 entire State of Illinois is receiving approximately 100,000 initial doses of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, and the vast majority of doses will go to State-run mass vaccination sites. We anticipate to receive about 400 doses from this initial supply and then for more substantial shipments of the vaccine to arrive in Lake County later in March.
- **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/AACPLakeCounty>
    - And the ACL town hall recording (in Spanish) from Wednesday, Feb 17 can be viewed here: [https://fb.watch/3\\_2Ub0lkB/](https://fb.watch/3_2Ub0lkB/)
  - 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 strongly encourage faith leaders to apply!**
  - We already have over 175 individuals representing over 80 community organizations serving as Community Health Ambassadors! Join the team.
  - Sign up here: [https://lchd.iad1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_e3BOCd49aly8xFz](https://lchd.iad1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_e3BOCd49aly8xFz)
- **Last week, our Health Department launched two new visualizations on our COVID-19 Data Hub.** Our cases map has been enhanced to allow you to toggle between percent change and COVID-19 prevalence. An "under 18" category has been added to the Incidence by Age Group graph, and a new graph shows the incidence rates in four different under 18 age groups. <https://covid19response-lakecountylil.hub.arcgis.com/>

- As a reminder, these conference calls are held the first and third Wednesday of every month. Our next conference calls are scheduled for March 17 and April 7.
  - The key points, chat files, and audio recordings are posted to the Health Department's website. <https://www.lakecountyiil.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

- **The U.S. House of Representatives passed the American Rescue Plan, a \$1.9 trillion dollar package - but it still needs to pass the Senate and be signed by the President prior to becoming law.**
- Specifically, the bill, if passed would provide funding for
  - Agriculture and nutrition programs, including the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
  - Schools and institutions of higher education;
  - Childcare and programs for older Americans and their families;
  - COVID-19 vaccinations, testing, treatment, and prevention;
  - Mental health and substance-use disorder services;
  - Emergency rental assistance, homeowner assistance, and other housing programs;
  - Payments to state, local, tribal, and territorial governments for economic relief;
  - Small business assistance, including specific programs for restaurants and live venues; and
- The bill also includes provisions that:
  - Raise the federal minimum wage to \$15 an hour by 2025;
  - Extend unemployment benefits and related services;
  - Provide a maximum recovery rebate of \$1,400 per eligible individual;
  - Expand and otherwise modify certain tax credits, including the child tax credit and the earned income tax credit;

**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](https://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 ages 65 and older are eligible for vaccination. **Vaccine supply remains limited, but as it becomes more 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.lakecountyiil.gov/4521/COVID-19-Vaccine#employers>
- **Small businesses affected by civil unrest** in the summer of 2020 have until March 23 to apply for U.S. Small Business Assistance loans. Businesses may apply online at [www.DisasterLoan.sba.gov](http://www.DisasterLoan.sba.gov). Information and details are also available by calling 800-659-2955.
- **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.**
- **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.
- Invite your colleagues or anyone else who may be interested to subscribe to the **Lake County Businesses email subscription list**  
<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.lakecountyl.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/>
- **Paycheck protection program** <https://www.sba.gov/funding-programs/loans/coronavirus-relief-options/paycheck-protection-program#section-header-0>
- **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](mailto:workplacerrights@atg.state.il.us).

## Municipalities

- **The Health Department expanded vaccinations for first responders on March 1.** Twenty paramedics were trained that day as vaccinators who will continue volunteering at the site throughout the month of March, and we were pleased to have approximately 400 first responders come through the site on Monday.
- **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. <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.
- **The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops issued a statement addressing the use of Johnson & Johnson vaccine.** Per the statement, "given the world-wide suffering that this pandemic is causing, we affirm again that being vaccinated can be an act of charity that serves



the common good.” “However, if one can choose among equally safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines, the vaccine with the least connection to abortion-derived cell lines should be chosen. Therefore, if one has the ability to choose a vaccine, Pfizer or Moderna’s vaccines should be chosen over Johnson & Johnson’s.”

- Right now, people are not able to choose which vaccine they receive because there is not enough supply available.
- The Johnson & Johnson vaccine did require the use of fetal cell cultures to produce the vaccine. This would have been cell lines from decades old fetal tissue - no fetal tissue is used in the vaccine, and no abortion was performed for the purposes of the development of any COVID-19 vaccine.
- I encourage you to review the statement in its entirety. [U.S. Bishop Chairmen for Doctrine and for Pro-Life Address the Use of the Johnson & Johnson Covid-19 Vaccine | USCCB](#)
- I also encourage you to review this resource from the North Dakota Department of Public Health that discusses this topic. [COVID-19 Vaccine Fetal Cell Handout.pdf](#)
- **Already, 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. <https://www.dph.illinois.gov/covid19/community-guidance/places-worship-guidance>.
- 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>
- **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). <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@lakecountyil.gov](mailto:egelber@lakecountyil.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.** 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/>.
- **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.** <https://www.lakecountyil.gov/4435/COVID-19-Testing>

Friday, March 5, 8 a.m. – 4 p.m.

**Round Lake Area Park District Harts Hill Park**

761 Hart Rd., Round Lake

Saturday, March 6, 8 a.m. – 4 p.m.

**Highland Park Metra Station**

1700 St. John’s Ave., Highland Park

Sunday, March 7, 8 a.m. – 4 p.m.

**Mundelein Metra Station**

205 N. Archer Ave., Mundelein

- A list of **warming centers** across Lake County can be found online at [www.lakecountyil.gov](http://www.lakecountyil.gov).

*March 3, 2021*

- **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>