

Lake County Updates

- **Yesterday marks the 1-year anniversary of the Lake County Health Department activating our Public Health Emergency Operations Center (PHEOC) on March 16, 2020.** The first COVID-19 case was reported in Lake County on March 11, 2020. Lake County has had 55,498 confirmed COVID-19 cases and 944 deaths. Over 844,000 tests have been administered. Lake County's recovery rate is 98.2 percent. <https://covid19response-lakecountyiil.hub.arcgis.com/>
- **This morning the Lake County Health Department reported the first case of the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) P.1 variant (Brazil) in Lake County. Health Department staff are investigating. The person's travel history is not known at this time., 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. Most cases investigated appear to be linked to domestic or international travel. 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.
 - New COVID-19 Variants (CDC): <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/transmission/variant.html>
- **The CDC has released new guidance about things fully vaccinated people can do:**
 - Fully vaccinated people (who have received their final dose of vaccine 2 or more weeks ago) can:
 - Visit with other fully vaccinated people indoors without wearing masks or physical distancing
 - Visit with unvaccinated people from a single household who are at low risk for severe COVID-19 disease indoors without wearing masks or physical distancing. Fully vaccinated grandparents may now visit with their grandchildren.
 - Refrain from quarantine and testing following a known exposure to a COVID-infected person, as long as they remain without symptoms.
 - For now, fully vaccinated people should continue to:
 - Take precautions like wearing a well-fitted mask and physical distancing, especially in public, when visiting unvaccinated people who are at increased risk or have a household member at increased risk, or when gathering with people from multiple households.
 - Avoid medium- and large-sized in-person gatherings
 - Get tested if experiencing COVID-19 symptoms
 - Follow guidance issued by individual employers
 - Follow CDC and health department travel requirements and recommendations
- **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.

- **In Region 9, our 7-day rolling average testing positivity rate is 3.1% as of March 13. Region positivity rates have not been this low since the end of June 2020.** Our ICU bed capacity is 34%, and there was only one day of increases in COVID-19 hospitalizations in the past 30 days. Lake County's testing positivity rate has continued to decrease to below 3% from February 2021.
 - <http://www.dph.illinois.gov/regionmetrics?regionID=9>
 - **DCEO guidelines for businesses:** <https://dceocovid19resources.com/restore-illinois/restore-illinois-phase-4/>
- **The CDC continues to recommend quarantine after travel.**
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/after-travel-precautions.html>
 - Lake County Health Department recommends at least a 10-day quarantine with symptom monitoring through 14 days.
 - Even if you test negative, stay home and self-quarantine for ideally 14 days or at least 10 days with symptom monitoring
 - If your test is positive, isolate yourself to protect others from getting infected.
 - Avoid being around people who are at increased risk for severe illness for 14 days, whether you get tested or not.
- **In total, over 203,000 doses of the COVID-19 vaccine have been administered to Lake County residents.** Over 72,000 of our residents, or 10.31% of our population, are fully vaccinated. Over 86,000 doses administered among Lake County residents are in those ages 65 and older. Nearly 58% of our 65 and older population have received at least one dose. Our county is averaging 5,560 doses administered daily on a 7-day rolling average.
 - Vaccination data: <http://www.dph.illinois.gov/covid19/vaccinatedata?county=Lake>
- **Our vaccination partners continue to assist us in vaccinating seniors, healthcare workers, Pre-K through 12th grade staff, daycare workers and manufacturing employees.** Additional groups of frontline essential workers will be prioritized once we have a higher percentage of our 65 and older population vaccinated.
- **Medical providers interested in administering COVID-19 vaccine to Lake County residents can find information on our website on how to become a COVID-19 vaccine provider.** Please email Noor Alhayani (nalhayani@lakecountyil.gov) with any questions or requests for assistance.
 - <https://www.lakecountyil.gov/4521/COVID-19-Vaccine#healthcare-providers>
- **The Lake County Fairgrounds site is now operating 6 days per week.** Daily vaccination capacity at the site surpassed 1,000 as of February 27, and will increase to 1,500 daily vaccinations this Friday and Saturday. Remaining people eligible in Phase 1a, seniors ages 65 and older, and first responders are being vaccinated at this site.
- **Vaccine supply continues to be limited. Lake County has been notified by the state to expect a 65% drop in first doses the week of March 29.** We expect our vaccine supply to improve in April, and more appointments first doses will be available. Demand far outpaces supply. Please

be patient as we wait for vaccine supply to increase. You can track the weekly vaccine we are receiving on our data hub: <https://www.lakecountyiil.gov/covid19data>

- **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> or calling the new state Vaccine Appointment Call Center at 833-621-1284. The call center is open 7 days a week from 6 a.m. to midnight.
 - <http://dph.illinois.gov/news/vaccine-allocations-increasing-illinois-launches-call-center-bridge-digital-divide-and-assist?fbclid=IwAR270YywIEJL0Or0I7xTBYidULr3f8a1dkiISsNA2gD-RYHPJqfQM0NlYms>
 - 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.lakecountyiil.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 yet adopt this expansion, called “Phase 1b plus.”**
 - 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.
 - 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.
- **We are grateful to our community for the overwhelming interest in volunteering to assist with mass vaccination. Thank you.** Our greatest 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://lakecountyiil.gov/volunteer>

- **Over 375,000 people have registered on the Lake County AllVax Portal.** Residents who need assistance registering can call (847) 377-8130 or email AllVax@lakecountyil.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.
 - Our call center is also collecting information for homebound individuals to receive the vaccine in their home. Please call the call center if you are unable to leave your home for a vaccine.
- **Lake County continues to see disparities in COVID prevalence and vaccination rates among our communities of color. For every white resident who tests positive, there are nearly 2 African American and nearly 4 Latinx residents who test positive. Additionally, of those who have been vaccinated, only 3% are Black and 8% are Hispanic (disproportionate rates based on Lake County's demographics of 6.5% Black and 14% Hispanic). LCHD continues its work with two community partnership groups—Asociacion Comunitaria Latina (ACL) and the African American Community Partnership Group (AACPG) to address these disparities.**
 - You can learn more about these groups on their Facebook pages:
 - <https://www.facebook.com/AACPLakeCounty>
 - <https://www.facebook.com/asociacioncomunitarialatinalc>
- **Our Community Health Ambassadors** are hard-at-work hosting AllVax registration events and sharing educational materials and resources with our community members. See the materials being shared on our website:
 - <https://www.lakecountyil.gov/4524/Community-Health-Ambassadors>
- **Community organizations, municipalities, businesses, and faith centers are invited to help support COVID-19 vaccination across Lake County by becoming a Community Health Ambassador.**
 - Over 200 individuals representing over 90 community organizations serve as Community Health Ambassadors! 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 April 7 and 21. **Please note there is no call scheduled on March 31.**
 - 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

- **The American Rescue Plan, a \$1.9 trillion dollar package is now law.**
<https://www.npr.org/sections/coronavirus-live-updates/2021/03/09/974841565/heres-whats-in-the-american-rescue-plan-as-it-heads-toward-final-passage> (NPR)
 - **This is a very large package that will help in responding to the pandemic, providing funds to support public health, contact tracing and testing, and mass COVID-19 vaccination. It also supports recovery efforts including support to small businesses, schools, rental and housing assistance, extended unemployment, energy assistance, food assistance programs funding, and support for local governments.**
 - **It expands the childcare tax credit for one year from \$2000 annually to as much as \$3600 per child, and provides the benefit through a monthly cash payment starting in July. Benefits will be higher for children under 6 and lower for children between 6-17. There are income cutoffs for higher income households- including single taxpayers earning up to \$75,000 and married couples earning up to \$150,000 would receive the full credit. Families who earn too much to qualify for the expanded tax credits could claim a \$2000 credit provided their income is below \$200,000 for a single taxpayer, and \$400,000 for a married couple.**
 - **Many people will be receiving a \$1400 stimulus payment as a result of this legislation. High earners, dependents, undocumented immigrants, and people without a social security number will not be eligible for a payment. People can check on the status of their payment on the IRS website:**

Get My Payment: <https://www.irs.gov/coronavirus/get-my-payment>

- **A special enrollment period for health insurance, due to the COVID-19 pandemic 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 April 3.** 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. Federal moratorium for evictions of rental tenants remains through March 31.

Businesses

- **By providing information about COVID-19 vaccination and establishing supportive policies and practices, employers can help increase vaccine uptake among essential workers.** Although COVID-19 vaccine supply is currently limited, it's not too early to share clear, complete, and accurate messages, promote confidence in the decision to get vaccinated, and engage your employees in plans to address potential barriers to vaccination. Strong confidence in the vaccines within your workplace leads to more people getting vaccinated, which leads to fewer COVID-19 illnesses, hospitalizations, and deaths. Detailed information is available to employers on the CDC website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/recommendations/essentialworker/workplace-vaccination-program.html>
- **As vaccines become more available, 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 on the SBA website, <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.**
 - 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.
- **Additional business resources:**
 - **Lake County Health Department** <https://www.lakecountyiil.gov/4412/Community-Guidance-and-Resources>
 - **Lake County Businesses email subscription list** <https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/ILLAKE/signup/18495>
 - **LCHD form for workplaces and facilities to use to report cases of COVID-19 and close contacts.** <https://redcap.dph.illinois.gov/surveys/?s=NHECLHEHFP>
 - **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>
- **ComEd Small Business Assistance Program:** <http://ComEd.com/SmallBizAssistance>
- **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

- **Friday, April 2 will be Mayor's Day at the Lake County Fairgrounds, where Lake County mayors can volunteer in non-medical roles at our mass vaccination site.** If you have not yet expressed your interest in participating and are wanting to do so, please contact Mandi Florip by the end of this week. mflorip@lakecountyleague.org. Other municipal leaders such as trustees are welcome to volunteer on other municipal days. Please contact Mandi.
 - Those of you who are in influential positions participating in our municipal days, we encourage you to write a short newsletter article, take pictures or a brief video on social media that explains the importance of getting vaccinated and encouraging our community members to AllVax to register to receive the vaccine. Please ensure that any videos or photos does not include other individuals who are receiving the vaccine.
- **As of today, the Illinois National Guard has deployed two mobile units consisting of 12 vaccinators, 24 medical screeners, and 4 non-medical personnel to our Lake County Fairgrounds site.** We expect them to be assisting for a 90-day period. This deployment is allowing us to expand our hours and daily capacity at the fairgrounds and to redirect existing staff and volunteers to other locations in Lake County.
- **Last week the Illinois State Board of Education and the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) released their Revised Public Health Guidance for Schools**
 - The most prominent change is that students can now be at least 3 foot but, ideally—6 feet, apart and fully masked at all times while in school. Please note, close contacts are still defined by IDPH as individuals who are within 6 feet of an infected person for a cumulative of 15 minutes. Close contacts to infected persons will be recommended to quarantine 10–14 days.
 - More schools will be resuming in-person learning &/or full day learning models
 - <https://www.isbe.net/Documents/revised-public-health-guidance-for-schools.pdf>
 - *New Exclusion Guidance: <https://www.isbe.net/Documents/IDPH-COVID19-Exclusion-Decison-Tree.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!
- 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 reach that phase.
- **[Update on religious/moral objections information and resources] 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 lines 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 \(ilcatholic.org\)](#)
- **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.
- **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.
- **Additional resources:**
 - **IDPH Funeral home guidance** for conducting funeral services of visitations. <https://www.dph.illinois.gov/covid19/community-guidance/funeral-homes>
 - **IDPH: Outbreaks of COVID-19 by type of facility** Outbreaks are defined as 5 or more cases linked to a common location (and 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>
 - **IDPH: Locations where exposures may have occurred** (not definitive exposure locations) <http://www.dph.illinois.gov/covid19/location-exposure?regionID=9>
 - **LCHD 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>
 - **Lake County Faith Leaders email subscription list:** <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. This site is open Monday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- **Mobile testing sites managed by the Illinois Department of Public Health will be in Lake County:**
 - Friday, 3/19, 8 a.m. – 4 p.m., Highland Park Metra Station (1700 St. John's Ave., Highland Park)

- Sunday, 3/21, 8 a.m. – 4 p.m., Mundelein Metra Station (205 N Archer Ave., Mundelein)
- Monday, 3/22, 8 a.m. – 4 p.m., Tempus SkipperBuds (215 North Point Dr., Winthrop Harbor)
- Visit our testing web page for more information:
<https://www.lakecountyil.gov/4435/COVID-19-Testing>.
- **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>