

Lake County Updates

- **The COVID-19 pandemic continues to break daily records even as the global vaccination pace accelerates.** The United States recently issued a travel advisory classifying approximately 80% countries worldwide as “Level 4: Do Not Travel”. The CDC recommends delaying travel until you are fully vaccinated because travel increases your chances of getting and spreading COVID-19.
 - More information can be found here, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/covid-data/covidview/index.html>.
- **Lake County has had over 60,042 confirmed COVID-19 cases and 972 deaths.** Over 1,052,000 tests have been administered. Lake County’s recovery rate is 98.3 percent.
<https://covid19response-lakecountyil.hub.arcgis.com/>
- **May is Mental Health Month.** The pandemic has brought challenges that may lead to increased stress and anxiety. We are encouraging all residents, young and old, to take some time to check in with their mental health this month and with those they love. Visit the CDC website (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/managing-stress-anxiety.html>) or Mental Health America websites to learn more (<https://www.mhanational.org/mental-health-month>) and for resources to share.
- **Last week, the World Health Organization included a new variant from India, B.1.617, in the agency’s weekly report.** This variant was first identified in India months earlier and has been increasingly detected. Preliminary data suggests that this variant may spread more easily than other variants that are circulating in the county, contributing to the major surge in the country.
<https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/weekly-epidemiological-update-on-covid-19---27-april-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 and getting vaccinated. The virus can’t mutate if it can’t replicate.
 - New COVID-19 Variants (CDC): <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/transmission/variant.html>
- **The CDC has issued new guidance for people who are fully vaccinated.** Summary of recent changes include:
 - Fully vaccinated people no longer need to wear a mask outdoors, except in certain crowded settings and venues.
 - Fully vaccinated workers no longer need to be restricted from work following an exposure as long as they are asymptomatic.
 - Fully vaccinated residents of non-healthcare congregate settings no longer need to quarantine following a known exposure.
 - Fully vaccinated asymptomatic people without an exposure may be exempted from routine screening testing, if feasible.

Read more on the guidance and recommendations for fully vaccinated people on the CDC's website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/fully-vaccinated-guidance.html>

- **Illinois remains in Phase 4 of the Restore Illinois plan.** While the state has met the target for vaccinations to move to the 'Bridge Phase' (70% of the population 65 years and older has received at least one dose of vaccine), COVID-related hospital admissions and the mortality rate have been increasing. At this time, IDPH is not able to predict a potential date for moving into the Bridge Phase.
 - <https://www.dph.illinois.gov/statewidemetrics>.
 - DCEO guidelines: <https://dceocovid19resources.com/restore-illinois-phase-4/>
- **As of May 1, the Region 9 positivity rate is 3.6% (Lake 2.8%) (McHenry 6.9%).** Region 9 has had 3 days of increases in COVID hospital admissions in the past 10 days, and ICU bed availability is gradually decreasing to 27%. <http://www.dph.illinois.gov/regionmetrics?regionID=9>
- **In total, over 491,000 doses of the COVID-19 vaccine have been administered to Lake County residents.** Over 207,000 of our residents, or 29.68% of our population, are fully vaccinated. Over 77% of our 65 and older population and 44% of our population age 16-64 have received at least one dose. Our county is averaging 4,570 doses administered daily on a 7-day rolling average. In the last two weeks, approximately 71,000 doses of the COVID-19 vaccine have been administered to Lake County residents, and the total of fully vaccinated residents has increased by 21%.
 - Vaccination data: <http://www.dph.illinois.gov/covid19/vaccinedata?county=Lake>
- **Next week, the FDA is expected to authorize the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine for individuals who are 12-15 years old.** The vaccine demonstrated high efficacy and was well tolerated in this age group.
 - **From end of March to April 18, the incidence of COVID-19 among those 14-18 years old has more than doubled in Lake County.** Spread among this younger population can lead to infections in many families across our communities.
 - The Health Department is working with local healthcare providers including pediatricians and family medicine providers to become COVID-19 vaccine providers in Lake County. There are over 100 COVID-19 vaccine providers able to provide vaccine.
 - Healthcare providers are encouraged to visit our webpage: https://allvax.lakecohealth.org/s/healthcare-providers?language=en_US
- **We are far from reaching herd immunity,** so continue to practice the 3Ws – wear masks, wash hands, watch your distance – and GET YOUR VACCINE as soon as you can.
- **As of April 23, the Lake County Health Department has resumed the use of the Johnson & Johnson (Janssen) COVID-19 vaccine,** following the recommendation of the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH). After thoroughly reviewing 15 reports of a rare blood clotting disorder with low platelets out of nearly 7 million people who received the vaccine, the FDA and CDC have confidence that

this vaccine is safe and effective in preventing COVID-19, and that the known and potential benefits of the vaccine outweigh the known and potential risks. Here's what you need to know:

- Your odds of contracting a possibly life-threatening case of COVID-19 are much higher than your odds of serious side effects from the vaccine.
 - The safety of COVID-19 vaccines is a top priority and is being closely monitored.
 - Lake County's supply of Johnson & Johnson vaccine continues to be limited, and should improve in the coming weeks.
- **The Health Department is currently vaccinating our Community Health Center patients at the Grand Avenue Health Center, Zion Health Center, Midlakes Health Center, and North Shore Health Center.** Patients should register through AllVax for appointments. Community members who wish to receive the Johnson & Johnson vaccine may also be vaccinated at our Community Health Centers and should call (847) 377-8130 for an appointment.
 - **Lake County continues to see disparities in COVID prevalence and vaccination rates among our communities of color.** Of those who have been vaccinated, 3.2% are Black and 10.1% are Hispanic (Lake County's demographics are 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:
 - ALC: <https://www.facebook.com/AACPGLakeCounty>
 - AACPG: <https://www.facebook.com/asociacioncomunitarialatina>
 - **The Health Department is collaborating with FEMA to support vaccination registration across the county.** If your organization is interested in hosting a registration event with FEMA (or if you would just like them to visit your organization for a few hours), please reach out to amanda.lindsey@fema.dhs.gov.
 - **The Health Department is working to bring vaccines to neighborhoods with low vaccination rates.** If your organization is interested in hosting a pop-up vaccination site, please fill out the application here: https://lchd.iad1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6MDmO2ip6o0Qwlg
 - **The Lake County Health Department is hiring!** We are starting two new programs to support our community members in accessing the resources, information, and support they need to stay healthy during this time. If you know of any community-minded individuals who would make great Case Managers or Community Health Workers, please encourage them to apply. If you have any questions, please email Anna Yankelev, ayankelev@lakecountyil.gov.
 - <https://www.LCHDcareers.com/jobs>
 - **Vaccination site volunteers are needed!** Visit our website to find information on the roles available to volunteer, get answers to frequently asked questions, and apply to be part of the effort. <http://lakecountyil.gov/volunteer>
 - **Communities across the nation are finding creative and fun ways to promote COVID-19 vaccination as demand is slowing.**

- **The White House COVID-19 Response Team has a Twitter thread featuring businesses offering special promotions for those who are vaccinated.** Examples are \$5 gift cards at retail chains to discounts at grocery stores, raffles for Superbowl tickets, and free donuts:
- <https://twitter.com/WHCOVIDResponse/status/1389707168413274114> If your business or organization is offering an incentive of some kind to community members who present proof of vaccination, feel free to let the Health Department know by emailing COVID19@lakecountyil.gov or tagging us on Facebook (@healthdepartment) Instagram or Twitter (@lakecohealth).
- **It is easier than ever to schedule your COVID-19 vaccine appointment, as we now have sufficient vaccine supply in Lake County.** All Illinoisans age 16 and older are eligible to get their vaccine.
 - **The Lake County Fairgrounds site now offers walk-in as well as scheduled appointments in AllVax.** Appointments are still encouraged but are no longer required. The walk-in schedule this week is as follows:
 - Wednesday (today): 2 p.m. to 5 p.m.
 - Friday, Saturday, and Sunday: Noon to 3 p.m.
 - **Next week the Fairgrounds will offer early morning and evening appointments and walk-ins to accommodate workers and families who may not be able to schedule a mid-day appointment.** Hours are as follows:
 - Monday, May 10: 7 a.m. to 11 a.m.
 - Wednesday, May 12: 3 p.m. to 7 p.m.
 - Friday, May 14: 7 a.m. to 11 a.m.
 - Saturday, May 15: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
 - **102 W. Water Street in Waukegan** offers both drive-through and walk-through appointments through AllVax, and also offers walk-ins. Hours at the site are Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays, 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
 - **The Curative vaccination site at 400 E. Rollins Road, Round Lake Beach** (the former K-Mart), offers walk-ins Tuesdays through Sundays, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. and appointments online: <https://cur.tv/lakeco>.
 - **The Zion Community Vaccination Site** opened April 26 at Zion-Benton Township High School New Tech Campus (1634 23rd Street, Zion), and an additional location opened today at the former K-Mart Plaza at 3363 Sheridan Road, Zion. Community members may walk in or schedule an appointment online: <https://sites.google.com/preventivehp.com/zion-community/home>.
 - Many retail pharmacies are also now promoting walk-ins for COVID-19 vaccination.
- **Our Health Department encourages people to explore their options for COVID-19 vaccination and take the first available appointment.** The sooner we all get vaccinated, the sooner we can put an end to the pandemic. You can access the vaccine in four ways:

- **Register in the AllVax system to schedule at a Lake County Health Department site;** <https://AllVax.lakecohealth.org> or simply walk-in during designated hours. Call (847) 377-8130 to schedule by phone, and homebound individuals may get on our list to receive a COVID-19 vaccine at home.
- Use the State's Vaccine Locator website that lists pharmacies and other public sites; <https://coronavirus.illinois.gov/s/vaccination-location> or call the state Vaccine Appointment Call Center at 833-621-1284. The call center is open 7 days a week from 6 a.m. to midnight.
- Check with your health system (i.e. hospital system or healthcare provider group) for registration and availability; and
- Community vaccination sites are opening and are being listed on our website as they become available – <https://www.lakecountyil.gov/vaccine>.
- **Another resource for locating a vaccine is the recently launched search on vaccines.gov** – you may select a vaccine brand and see which locations near your zip code have it in stock. <https://vaccines.gov>
- **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 230 individuals representing over 90 community organizations are hard-at-work hosting AllVax registration events and sharing educational materials and resources with our community members.
 - **CHA materials:** <https://www.lakecountyil.gov/4524/Community-Health-Ambassadors>
 - **Sign up:** 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 May 19 and June 2.
 - 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 federal government has announced a paid leave tax credit with funds from the American Rescue Plan (ARP) to help cover time off costs related to the COVID-19 vaccine for employers with fewer than 500 employees.**
 - Tax credits in the ARP are designed to reduce the spread of COVID-19 by giving tax credits to employers with fewer than 500 employees whose employees take time off due to one of the following: COVID-19 symptoms; COVID-19 testing; quarantine due to COVID-19 (or are caring for someone who is); or caring for a child whose school or childcare provider closed due to COVID-19.

- The Administration has released fact sheets from the Department of Treasury and IRS to help employers learn how to claim paid sick leave credits on their quarterly tax filings.
 - <https://home.treasury.gov/system/files/136/Paid-Leave-Credit-Snapshot.pdf>
 - <https://www.irs.gov/newsroom/employer-tax-credits-for-employee-paid-leave-due-to-covid-19>
- **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 May 31.** 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 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>
- **Lake County is working with community partners to help keep families in their homes as we work to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.** Through the federal emergency rental assistance program eligible households may receive up to 12 months of past due rent and up to three months of assistance with future rent, but no more than 12 months of assistance total. Payments from the program will be made directly to landlords and/or utility companies. Eligibility and application information is available on the Lake County website.
 - Rental Assistance: <https://www.lakecountyyil.gov/renthelp>.
- **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 also remains through June 30.
- **The American Rescue Plan, a \$1.9 trillion dollar package is now law.**
 - **Many people will be receiving a \$1400 stimulus payment as a result of this legislation. People can check on the status of their payment on the IRS website:**
 - Get My Payment: <https://www.irs.gov/coronavirus/get-my-payment>

Businesses

- **The US Small Business Administration has created a Restaurant Revitalization Fund**
 - Program provides emergency assistance for eligible restaurants, bars, and other qualifying businesses impacted by COVID-19.
 - Visit www.sba.gov and click on COVID Relief section to learn more about Restaurant Revitalization Fund, Paycheck Protection Program and more.
 - https://www.sba.gov/funding-programs/loans/covid-19-relief-options/restaurant-revitalization-fund?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery

- **The Health Department has a webpage for employers for COVID-19 vaccine information.** Businesses interested in hosting vaccination events for their employees can find information on this page. https://allvax.lakecohealth.org/s/employers?language=en_US
- **The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission has a detailed webpage with information on COVID-19-related legal questions,** such as what information employers can request when an employee calls in sick, if employers can require proof of vaccination, and mandatory vaccination policies and accommodations. <https://www.eeoc.gov/wysk/what-you-should-know-about-covid-19-and-ada-rehabilitation-act-and-other-eeo-laws>
- **By providing information about COVID-19 vaccination and establishing supportive policies and practices, employers can help increase vaccine uptake among yours workers.** Please 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>
- **The State has issued updated guidance, indicating that fully vaccinated or recently tested people do not count toward capacity limits at venues.** The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity published additional guidance on its website: <https://www2.illinois.gov/dceo/Documents/Essential%20Business%20FAQ.pdf>.
 - The guidance states that: “Individuals with proof of full vaccination plus 14 days or a negative COVID-19 test (PCR) 1 to 3 days prior to an event or outing do not count against capacity limits. Patrons and attendees must show proof of completed vaccination series or recent negative COVID-19 test prior to entry and are subject to additional state face covering rules and social distancing guidelines of at least 6 feet between individuals that are not in the same household or group even if they meet the criteria for demonstrated immunity.”
 - The guidance also states that: “Businesses are responsible for managing their capacity and admission procedures within the venue to establish a protocol and system to verify proof of a vaccination plus 14 days or a negative COVID-19 test.”
- **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.**
- **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>
- **Report an unsafe work environment:** Workplace Rights Bureau of the Illinois Attorney General's Office, 844-740-5076 or workplacerrights@atg.state.il.us.

Municipalities

- **If you are planning events for this summer, please refer to the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) guidance** for outdoor markets & festivals with multiple stations, vendors, or attractions:
 - The event may operate at 15 people per 1,000 sq. ft. **OR** at lesser of 20% of space or venue capacity. Capacity restrictions will be reassessed on an ongoing basis throughout Phase 4. Once Illinois reaches the 'Bridge Phase' the recommended capacity limit will increase.
 - Employers should conduct in-person screening of employees upon entry into workplace to verify no presence of COVID-19 symptoms.
 - Event host should display signage at entry with face covering requirements, social distancing guidelines, cleaning protocols, and any reduced capacity limit, in multiple languages as needed.
 - Customers should wear face coverings over their nose and mouth at all times while on the premises (exceptions can be made for people with medical conditions or disabilities that prevent them from safely wearing a face covering).
 - Event host should provide hand washing or hand sanitization stations at entry points and at high-traffic areas (e.g., booths, stalls) throughout the venue.
 - Clean and disinfect common areas (e.g., restrooms, checkout counters) and surfaces which are touched by multiple people (e.g., entry/exit doorknobs, stair railings) frequently; every hour recommended for high-traffic areas.
 - <https://dceocovid19resources.com/restore-illinois-phase-4/outdoor-markets-and-festivals/>
- **Municipal leaders who wish to volunteer at vaccination sites** during special municipal days should contact Mandi Florip. mflorip@lakecountyleague.org.
 - Please share about your volunteer experience, whether in your newsletter or on social media. As a trusted leader in your community, you can reinforce the importance of getting vaccinated and encouraging our community members to register in AllVax.

- **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 to report cases of COVID-19 and close contacts**. <https://redcap.dph.illinois.gov/surveys/?s=NHECLHEHFP>

Faith-Based Organizations

- **Guidance for places of worship has been updated by IDPH.** Current guidelines recommend gatherings of no more than 50 people or 50% capacity, whichever is less, in smaller indoor facilities with total capacity less than 200 people. In larger indoor facilities with capacity of 200 people or more, or when outdoors, current guidelines recommend gatherings of no more than 25% capacity. Where these limits cannot be followed in places of worship, these guidelines are recommended:
 - Set a capacity limit for the place of worship that allows for extensive social distancing (6 feet or more) between congregants.
 - <http://www.dph.illinois.gov/covid19/community-guidance/places-worship-guidance>
- **Multiple Faith Communities in Lake County are organizing vaccination events for their congregations.** This involves partnering with a local pharmacy or medical group for a pop-up event, promoting the event and helping fill up appointments, and providing the location and non-medical volunteers. If you are interested in hosting a vaccination event, please reach out to Buddy Hargett, bhargett@lakecountyil.gov.
 - **More information is available on our Employers page**
https://allvax.lakecohealth.org/s/employers?language=en_US
- **Resources on religious/moral information on COVID-19 vaccines**
 - English Statement: [COVID-19Vaccines_Dec182020FINAL.pdf \(ilcatholic.org\)](#)
 - Spanish Statement: [COVID-19Vaccines_Dec182020FINAL_SPANISH.pdf \(ilcatholic.org\)](#)
 - [U.S. Bishop Chairmen for Doctrine and for Pro-Life Address the Use of the Johnson & Johnson Covid-19 Vaccine | USCCB](#)
 - [COVID-19 Vaccine Fetal Cell Handout.pdf](#)
- **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>
- **Form 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>
- **CDC webpage dedicated to communities of faith –** <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/index.html>

Community Resources

- **After over a year of operations and more than 1,000 families served, the CATCH program (Community Action to Combat Hunger) is coming to an end.** We are so grateful to all the organizations and individuals who have supported this effort. After May 17, the Lake County Health Department will begin taking referrals for grocery delivery for individuals in quarantine or isolation who do not have access to other resources.
- **FEMA is providing funeral reimbursement support to those that lost a loved one to COVID-19.** Funeral expenses incurred after January 20, 2020 are reimbursable. Applications began on April 12, 2021. To apply, call the hotline c (TTY: 800-462-7585)
 - Hours of Operation: Monday – Friday 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.
 - FEMA funeral reimbursement program and eligibility: <https://www.fema.gov/disasters/coronavirus/economic/funeral-assistance#eligible>
- 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. <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>