

Lake County Updates

- **Lake County has had over 61,053 confirmed COVID-19 cases and 991 deaths.** Over 1.1 million tests have been administered. Lake County's recovery rate is 98.3 percent.
 - Data hub: <https://covid19response-lakecountyil.hub.arcgis.com/>
- **The first case of B.1.617.1 variant strain (India) was identified in Lake County in a person associated with travel to India.** The family had taken the appropriate quarantine and isolation precautions upon return from travel.
 - The emergence of new variants of COVID-19 across the world and in Lake County underscores the importance of getting vaccinated. The virus can't mutate if it can't replicate.
 - It is important to follow public health strategies after travel.
 - 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.** Fully vaccinated people no longer need to wear a mask or physically distance in any setting, except where required by federal, state, local, tribal, or territorial laws, rules, and regulations, including local business and workplace guidance. Fully vaccinated people can refrain from testing following a known exposure unless they are residents or employees of a correctional or detention facility or a homeless shelter.
 - Guidance for fully vaccinated people (CDC): <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/fully-vaccinated-guidance.html>
- **Illinois entered the Bridge Phase of the Restore Illinois plan on Friday, May 14.** More than 70% of the Illinois population age 65 and older have received at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine. The Bridge Phase allows for higher capacity limits in both indoor and outdoor areas. For example, in dining settings, they are able to increase indoor capacity to 30% (previously 25% in Phase 4) and outdoor capacity to 50%.
 - Illinois metrics: <https://www.dph.illinois.gov/statewidemetrics>.
 - Bridge phase: https://www2.illinois.gov/ISNews/22961-A_Bridge_to_Phase_5.pdf
- **As of May 15, the Region 9 positivity rate is 2.6% (Lake 2.2%) (McHenry 4.2%).** Region 9 has had 3 days of increases in COVID hospital admissions in the past 10 days, and ICU bed availability is gradually increasing to 34%. <http://www.dph.illinois.gov/regionmetrics?regionID=9>
- **Last week Lake County moved back into 'orange' risk level on the State's County Level Risk Metrics Map.** Lake County continues to see higher levels of COVID-19 cases and increasing deaths. Moving to 'orange' does not mean that there are new restrictions; however it does indicate that residents may want to be more cautious about activities, especially if they are not vaccinated.
 - IDPH County Level Risk Metrics Map <https://www.dph.illinois.gov/countymetrics?county=Lake>
- **In total, over 549,000 doses of the COVID-19 vaccine have been administered to Lake County residents.** Over 244,000 of our residents, or 34.93% of our population, are fully vaccinated. Over 80% of our 65 and older population and 52% of our population age 16-64 have received at least one dose.

- Vaccination data: <http://www.dph.illinois.gov/covid19/vaccinedata?county=Lake>
- **On May 12, the CDC authorized the use of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine for people ages 12-15.** Clinical trials have shown that the vaccine is very safe and effective in this age group. For additional information about the COVID-19 vaccine for ages 12 and up, visit the CDC page COVID-19 Vaccines for Children and Teens (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/recommendations/adolescents.html>). The CDC also updated their guidance for vaccine administration. COVID-19 vaccines can now be given at the same time as other routine vaccinations rather than spacing them out 14 days before or after.
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2021/s0512-advisory-committee-signing.html>
- **School Spirit Day is this coming Sunday, May 23 from 9:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. at the Lake County Fairgrounds.** Youth ages 12 and older and their families are invited to get their COVID-19 vaccine during the event. There will be free giveaways, raffles, music from Lake County's 102.3 XLC, and free Kona Ice for anyone receiving their vaccine during the day. Show your school spirit by wearing school colors, athletic uniforms, or prom attire for extra chances at raffle prizes.
 - Appointments can be scheduled through the AllVax Portal, <https://AllVax.lakecohealth.org>, and walk-ins will be accepted while supplies last. The vaccine is free to all, regardless of insurance or immigration status.
 - https://allvax.lakecohealth.org/s/find-a-vaccine?language=en_US#school-spirit-day
- **The Health Department is providing vaccinations at our Grand Avenue Health Center, Zion Health Center, Midlakes Health Center, and North Shore Health Center.** Appointments are available on AllVax. Community members who wish to receive the Johnson & Johnson vaccine 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, 3.3% are Black and 11.3% are Hispanic (Lake County's demographics are 6.5% Black and 14% Hispanic). There are several ways your organization can help address these disparities:
 - Host a registration event to help community members sign up for a vaccine. FEMA can help support these outreach and education events. Contact Amanda.Lindsey@fema.dhs.gov for more information.
 - Host a Mobile pop-up vaccination event. Register here: https://lchd.iad1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6MDmO2ip6o0Qwlg
 - Help recruit Community Health Workers to support community-based outreach, education, and vaccination. Apply here: <https://www.LCHDcareers.com/jobs>
- **Communities across the nation are finding creative and fun ways to promote COVID-19 vaccination as demand has slowed.**
 - **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@lakecountyl.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 12 and older are eligible to get their vaccine.
- **Walk-ins are plentiful for COVID-19 vaccines.** Hours are updated regularly on the Health Department's social media and on the AllVax website. Appointments are also available on **the AllVax website**; <https://AllVax.lakecohealth.org>. Call (847) 377-8130 to schedule by phone, and homebound individuals may get on our list to receive a COVID-19 vaccine at home.
 - **Lake County Fairgrounds hours:**
 - Sunday 5/23: 9:30am - 5:30pm (School Spirit Day)
 - Monday 5/24: 1pm - 6pm
 - Friday 5/28: 1pm - 6pm
 - Saturday 5/29: 9:30am - 5pm
 - Sunday 5/30 and Monday 5/31: CLOSED for Memorial Day Weekend
 - **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. Closed Sunday, May 30 for Memorial Day Weekend.
 - **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 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:
 - 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.lakecountyiil.gov/4524/Community-Health-Ambassadors>
- **Sign up:** https://lchd.iad1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_e3BOCd49aly8xFz
- **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.
- **The Health Department will be re-evaluating the schedule of these conference calls for the month of June,** and will send announcements with the upcoming schedule when it is determined.
 - 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 governor has issued a new executive order which includes changes in masking guidance for fully vaccinated people.** Following guidance from the CDC that fully vaccinated people can stop wearing a mask and practicing social distancing in most but not all indoor and outdoor settings, Governor JB Pritzker and the Illinois Department of Public Health have announced that Illinois will align state executive orders with the latest CDC guidance and rescind IDPH emergency rules enforcing masking and distancing. **CDC will be clarifying this guidance in the near future.**
 - The CDC continues to require masks for everyone in healthcare settings, in congregate settings and on transit.
 - In addition, in line with CDC guidance, the Illinois State Board of Education and Illinois Department of Public Health require masks in schools.
 - The Illinois Department of Children and Family Services requires masks in daycare.
 - Updated executive order- https://www2.illinois.gov/IISNews/23322-Bridge_Phase_Executive_Order.pdf
- **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>
- **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.lakecountyil.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** providing 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 your 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>
- **Under State guidance, fully vaccinated or recently tested people do not count toward capacity limits at venues:** <https://www2.illinois.gov/dceo/Documents/Essential%20Business%20FAQ.pdf>.
- **Thank you, businesses, for all you are doing to keep your staff and customers safe during the pandemic.** 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.lakecountyyil.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

- **The Health Department is exploring alternative ways to reach community members about local vaccination opportunities, including SMS text messaging.** If your municipality uses SMS or telephone alerts such as 'reverse 911' and could use this technology to promote vaccination sites, please contact the Health Department communications team at COVID19@lakecountyyil.gov.
- **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

- **The Executive Order recently issued by the governor does not limit the free exercise of religion.** To protect the health and safety of faith leaders, staff, congregants and visitors, religious organizations and houses of worship are encouraged to consult and follow the recommended practices and guidelines from the Illinois Department of Public Health. Religious organizations are encouraged to take precautions for their congregants and visitors who are not fully vaccinated to ensure social distancing, the use of face coverings, and implementation of other public health measures.
- **The bridge phase guidance, effective May 14, does not specifically set capacity limits for faith communities.** It does provide capacity limits for social events. Indoors, events are limited to the lesser of 250 people indoors and outdoors 500 people. However, those capacity limits still should consider the ability to ensure social distancing and masking as you may not be aware of who is and is not vaccinated when planning prayers, services, or events.
- **Guidance for places of worship was updated by IDPH in April, 2021.** Those 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** <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

- **As of May 17, the Lake County Health Department is taking referrals for grocery delivery for individuals in quarantine or isolation who do not have access to other resources.** Please call 847-377-8130 and ask to speak with a case manager.
- **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 844-684-6333 (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>