



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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14 Illinois Counties at Warning Level for Coronavirus Disease

SPRINGFIELD – The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) today reported 14 counties in Illinois are considered to be at a warning level for novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19). A county enters a warning level when two or more COVID-19 risk indicators that measure the amount of COVID-19 increase.

Fourteen counties are currently reported at a warning level – Bureau, Cass, Clinton, Franklin, Greene, Grundy, Hancock, Jefferson, Kane, LaSalle, Moultrie, Perry, Union, Will.

These counties saw cases or outbreaks associated with weddings, businesses, birthday parties, long-term care facilities and other congregate settings, bars, sports camps, and spread among members of the same household. Public health officials are seeing people in some communities are not wearing masks, or if they are, they are being worn incorrectly. Local health departments are finding it challenging to obtain the information necessary to halt local transmission, by quickly identifying exposures from contacts of cases and businesses. Inconsistent messaging from local elected leaders are contributing to on-going transmission in some communities where there is little public concern for consequences or enforcement of social distancing, banning large gatherings, or quarantine/isolation orders.

Several counties are taking swift action and implementing mitigation measures to help slow spread of the virus. Examples include increasing the availability in testing in their community and working with local businesses to educate and spot check mask wearing and guideline adherence.

IDPH uses numerous indicators when determining if a county is experiencing stable COVID-19 activity, or if there are warning signs of increased COVID-19 risk in the county.

- **New cases per 100,000 people.** If there are more than 50 new cases per 100,000 people in the county, this triggers a warning.
- **Number of deaths.** This metric indicates a warning when the weekly number of deaths increases more than 20% for two consecutive weeks.
- **Weekly test positivity.** This metric indicates a warning when the 7-day test positivity rate rises above 8%.

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- **ICU availability.** If there are fewer than 20% of intensive care units available in the region, this triggers a warning.
- **Weekly emergency department visits.** This metric indicates a warning when the weekly percent of COVID-19-like-illness emergency department visits increase by more than 20% for two consecutive weeks.
- **Weekly hospital admissions.** A warning is triggered when the weekly number of hospital admissions for COVID-19-like-illness increases by more than 20% for two consecutive weeks.
- **Tests perform.** This metric is used to provide context and indicate if more testing is needed in the county.
- **Clusters.** This metric looks at the percent of COVID-19 cases associated with clusters or outbreaks and is used to understand large increase in cases.

These metrics are intended to be used for local level awareness to help local leaders, businesses, local health departments, and the public make informed decisions about personal and family gatherings, as well as what activities they choose to do. The metrics are updated weekly, from the Sunday-Saturday of the prior week.

A map and information of each county's status can be found on the IDPH website at <https://www.dph.illinois.gov/countymetrics>.

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