



**Quad Cities COVID-19 Coalition  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
April 20, 2020**

**Current COVID-19 case count**

**Scott County** – 17 new cases for a total of 172.

**Rock Island County** – 6 new cases for a total of 268. 20 patients are in the hospital

**New normal, many unknowns**

Remarks from Nita Ludwig, administrator of the Rock Island County Health Department and Edward Rivers, director of the Scott County Health Department

For many of us, the biggest change in COVID-19 guidance for our communities has been the proclamation by both the states of Illinois and Iowa to close in-person educational instruction in our

K-12 schools through the end of the 2019-2020 academic year. This guidance tells us that we are entering a phase of a temporary new normal, at least for the moment.

We all must continue to do our part by:

- Social distancing by staying at home as much as possible
- Keeping at least 6 feet between you and anyone else
- Washing your hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds each time and using hand sanitizer when washing your hands is not possible.
- Covering coughs and sneezes with a tissue or into your elbow.
- Wearing a face covering when you must go out for essential supplies
- Staying home when you are ill.

This COVID-19 situation isn't going to resolve itself quickly and we will continue to look at decisions that will best protect our communities. That being said, future decisions won't be easy. They will likely be hard. That's because there are some knowns and many unknowns when it comes to COVID-19:

Edward Rivers:

What is known:

- COVID-19 continues to spread in our community and will continue to spread in the upcoming days and weeks. Even when we reach and pass our peak, that doesn't mean the number of cases will go down to zero.
- COVID-19 continues to infect people of all ages.

- Keeping ourselves spread out and away from one another is what will make us successful at combating this pandemic.

What is unknown:

- We don't know when our peak, or high point for our number of cases, will happen. The best we have right now are forecasts created by public health models...and similar to weather forecasts, they can be off. But at least we are using the information available to better prepare ourselves for what is ahead.
- It is also unknown for how long we will have to social distance and stay home. That isn't an easy answer or a comfortable answer, but it's a realistic answer.
  - The good thing is, public health and our healthcare partners are here to help provide these recommendations to you and your family. It is vital for you all to listen to the guidance and follow it for yourself, your family, and your community.
- We also don't know what our long-term "normal" will look like. We understand, this can be the hardest thing to deal with at this point.

But there is a very important known for our community: we know that our community is strong and resilient and we will push forward.

### **Community Health Care**

Remarks from Tom Bowman, chief executive officer of Community Health Care Inc.

- Throughout this pandemic, CHC has continued to operate with two overarching goals that have set the foundation for our decision making on our operations:
  - Put our staff and patients' safety first by reducing exposure risks and face to face interactions as much as possible. This also helps extend the life of our PPE supply.
  - Maintain access to care for both established and new patients to help reduce the impact on our local Emergency Rooms and Hospitals.
- We started Curbside Care at most locations on March 17. This allowed us to separate sick from well patients early on and reduce exposure risk for staff in clinics.
- We shut down Dental Clinics for non-emergency care on March 19th until further notice. Huge hit to us financially.
- We have begun using Telehealth to screen dental emergencies before they come to the clinics. Some things are not emergent and can be managed at home. We will recall those patients when it is safe to do so.
- We have implemented Curbside pickup for our pharmacy so patients still can access their prescription medications.
- Once we identified that COVID-19 was being spread throughout the community, we moved quickly to ramp up telehealth so we could eliminate patients coming into the clinics for care and screen patients before needing a COVID-19 test.
  - Telehealth includes translation services for non-English speakers

- We expanded Curbside Care to include routine care so we could see both respiratory infection and COVID-19 patients, as well as patients needing routine care, including physical exams, labs, immunizations, vitals, etc.
- The Curbside Care team essentially acts as “the hands of our Primary Care Providers.” The patient has a telehealth visit first and if further assessment is needed, they are referred to our Curbside Care team.
- The Curbside Care team rotates to a different clinic each day, but any patient can go to that location for care. This creates a designated team who are the only ones that come in contact with patients. This team has the appropriate PPE to prevent exposure, and it reduces how much PPE is needed daily to serve our patients.
- We currently are seeing 80-90 percent of patients using telehealth first.
- We are running 70-100 patients a day through our Curbside Care teams.
- Through our various platforms, 350-400 patients are being served on a daily basis.
- COVID-19 symptoms and positive tests have been increasing. We anticipate this will continue, and we may need to expand our Curbside Care team to accommodate the need.
- We are working on a couple of additional outreach efforts to support our health departments and communities in testing and will have more on that later in the week.

### **Child care**

Remarks Becky White, regional director, Child Care Resource and Referral of Southeast Iowa

We support child care programs and providers in 19 counties, including Scott County. During COVID-19, we have worked closely with the Department of Human Services to provide Consultation and Technical Assistance to Child Care Center Directors and Registered Child Development Home Providers.

It is recognized that child care programs are a necessity for the essential workforce to continue their employment and support our communities. In Iowa, child care programs are encouraged to stay open, but they have taken several measures to ensure the health and safety of the children and staff in their programs. The guidance given to them from the Iowa Department of Human Services is based on the most current recommendations of the CDC and Iowa Department of Public Health.

These current recommendations include that they complete a health screening as the children enter the program, including taking the temperature of the child. Most programs are greeting families at the door for drop off and pick up to minimize the number of parents and other family members entering the facility. Throughout the day, it is recommended that children and classroom staff are divided into groups of 10 or fewer, and they remain with the same group as much as possible. And of course, increase the amount of hand washing and cleaning in the center has been vital.

As with many professions, COVID-19 has led to many changes and stressors for child care providers across Iowa. Many of them are small businesses that depend on consistent attendance and enrollment of children to manage their financial obligations such as staff salary, rent, and supplies. With many families working from home or unemployed, as well as the reduced class sizes of 10 or fewer, many of the programs we work with are stressed about the longevity of their program.

Iowa Child Care Resource and Referral, along with various community partners such as Early Childhood Iowa, have been working to connect programs with information and resources available to them to help with these additional financial stressors. Our consultants work with individual programs daily to answer all types of questions, direct them to additional resources and provide guidance.

Additionally, Child Care Resource and Referral and the Department of Human Services have delivered cleaning supplies and paper products to programs that have requested items in efforts to show our support.

It is also important to mention that Child Care Resource and Referral of Southeast Iowa provides Parent Referral Services to the entire state. Parents, especially essential workers, are encouraged to call our parent referral phone number at 855-244-5301 or [www.iowaccrr.org/families](http://www.iowaccrr.org/families) to receive a list of possible child care providers to meet their needs. Our Parent Referral Specialists ask for some basic information from the parent such as hours of care needed, location and ages of the children. They then complete an individualized search to provide a list of possible child care programs that the parent can contact to select child care.

To the committed child care providers within our community, we owe them a big thanks for continuing to be a workforce behind the workforce and for providing care to our children. Additional information about Child Care Guidance and support can be found on our statewide webpage, [www.iowaccrr.org](http://www.iowaccrr.org).

### **More information and video**

- Flattening the Curve Resource: <https://covid19.healthdata.org/united-states-of-america>
- Together Quad Cities: Keep Staying Home video: <https://youtu.be/GG0hRvJ0So>
- IDPH COVID-19 PSA (television): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FvsF02uCM-M&feature=youtu.be>
- IDPH COVID-19 PSA (radio): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xznWLKeZO3E&feature=youtu.be>
- [www.TogetherQC.com](http://www.TogetherQC.com)

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