



Quad Cities COVID-19 Coalition FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 20, 2020

Current COVID-19 case count

Scott County – 3 new cases for a total of 312

Total deaths in Scott County: 8

Rock Island County – 3 new cases for a total of 648. 13 patients are in the hospital.

One new death: a woman in her 90s

Total deaths in Rock Island County: 24

Today's call

A video recording of today's media call can be found at

<https://www.scottcountyiowa.com/health/covid19/news>

Years of life lost

Remarks from Janet Hill, chief operating officer at the Rock Island County Health Department

Every day for more than 2 months, we've described people who test positive for COVID-19 in broad terms to protect their health privacy: man in his 50s, woman in her 40s, and four times now, infant younger than 1. Days later, we might describe a patient after he dies. We say man in his 50s, but his family might know him as "Husband," "Dad," and "Papa."

Our contact tracing team gets to know these families, and their grief takes a toll on us. Early in this response on a Saturday in March, I sat with our chief nurse who was interviewing a woman who would be a widow a short time later. I teared up just listening to our nurse trying to do her job while offering comforting words. Just this week, one of our newly trained contact tracers hung up after an interview and started sobbing. She took on part of the grief of someone who had just lost her husband.

In public health, we protect health at the population level. We use a statistic that calculates premature death. It's called Years of Potential Life Lost. The calculation is simple: The age of death is subtracted from a predetermined number. In the U.S., that number is 75. The difference is the Years of Potential Life Lost.

People are dying before their time from COVID-19. This week, we announced a man in his 30s had died. That's up to 45 years of Years of Potential Life Lost. 45 years. What could he have accomplished in his lifetime?

We've asked you to change your everyday life for weeks now. We know this is hard and even a burden, but your efforts have started to work. We are seeing fewer cases in Rock Island County, even as testing becomes more available. Your efforts are slowing the spread of this virus.

Soon, Gov. JB Pritzker's stay-at-home order will lapse and all Quad Citians will have decisions to make about how we react. He announced new information for Phase 3 openings about 30 minutes ago, but we ask that you still exercise caution when you go out and avoid gatherings of larger than 10 people. You still should wear a facial covering. You still should keep at least 6 feet between you and others. We've come too far to go backwards now.

We're all ready for a vacation, but the virus isn't taking a holiday. Good public health means that each of us owe it to each other to protect all of us. Your decisions potentially steal years from others.

Nothing normal anytime soon

Remarks from Ed Rivers, director of the Scott County Health Department

As Janet expressed just moments ago, each of us as residents of our community have a responsibility to protect ourselves and others around us from COVID-19, even as we are starting to see fewer cases of illness. That includes listening to the public health messages we have shared over and over: only go out and about for essential trips, maintain at least 6 feet of physical distance between yourself and others, wash your hands, and stay home when you are sick.

I have asked Dr. Louis Katz, medical director of the Scott County Health Department, to join the briefing today to help express the importance of continuing to respond to COVID-19 as a community. We have asked him to address what the future looks like for this virus in our communities and why it is that we can't expect to go back to "normal" in the near future.

(Dr. Katz did not speak from prepared remarks.)

More information

- www.TogetherQC.com
- coronavirus.iowa.gov/
- <https://www.dph.illinois.gov/covid19>
- Flattening the Curve Resource: <https://covid19.healthdata.org/united-states-of-america>

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