



**Quad Cities COVID-19 Coalition  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

June 11, 2020

**Current COVID-19 case count**

**Scott County** – Total of 399

Total deaths in Scott County: 10

**Rock Island County** – 10 new cases Thursday for a total of 763

Currently in hospital: 1

Total deaths in Rock Island County: 28

**Today's call**

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

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

**Benefit of vaccines**

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

COVID-19 continues to be in our community and a factor in many decisions that we make until a vaccine is developed or another eventuality that decreases transmissibility occurs. This is a prime example of the need for and benefit of vaccines to prevent diseases from spreading quickly through our communities.

Today we are joined by the Scott County Health Department's clinical services manager as well as members of our medical community to provide an important message to our community on the importance of continuing vaccinations during the pandemic.

**Benefit of vaccines**

Remarks from Roma Taylor, clinical services manager of the Scott County Health Department

As we wait patiently for a vaccine to be developed to prevent COVID-19 illnesses related to the coronavirus, I would like us as a community to remember that we currently have approved vaccines that can protect infants, adolescents, and adults from 27 diseases.

However, recent data from the State of Iowa reports that stay-at-home and shelter-in-place recommendations as well as fear of COVID-19 have caused a decline in well child visits and fewer vaccine doses being given, leaving children at risk for vaccine-preventable diseases.

In the state of Iowa, of all non-flu immunizations for people of all ages, we have seen a decrease of 40.4 percent in March and April of this year from the same time period last year.

The month of April experienced the highest decreases in immunizations, with a 35 percent drop in immunizations given for children under age 2; and a decrease of approximately 75 percent for adolescents.

Vaccines provided to children under the age of 2 protect against illnesses such as pertussis and measles, both highly infectious illnesses that spread very rapidly. Vaccines for adolescents provide protection against illnesses such as meningitis, hepatitis, and serious types of pneumonia.

I wanted to take a minute to explain why we worry about decreases in immunizations levels, even in the short term. As we have seen firsthand with coronavirus, germs can travel quickly through a community and make a lot of people sick. If enough people get sick, it can lead to an outbreak. Outbreaks are especially dangerous for people who can't get vaccinated — people with serious allergies, a weakened immune system from things such as cancer or other conditions.

But when enough people are vaccinated against a certain disease, the germs can't travel as easily from person to person — and the entire community is less likely to get the disease. This is what we call community or herd immunity and it is very important for those vulnerable individuals.

Our community is already vulnerable due to COVID-19. We cannot afford additional outbreaks from measles or pertussis that can make people equally as sick or possibly even die.

### **Vaccines lead to antibodies**

Remarks from Dr. Becca Hayes, Pediatrician, Community Health Care, Inc.

- Antibodies help fight off infections. Our bodies make antibodies after an infection or after we receive a vaccine.
- Having antibodies to COVID may mean you have been exposed in the past, and research is being done to see if this means you are protected from getting it again.
- It is important to continue to receive the vaccines available that can protect our children from so many other illnesses such as measles and whooping cough.
- Community Health Care is seeing established and new patients outside to keep our children up-to-date with vaccines and protected from preventable disease.

### **Disease prevention is core public health**

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

Communicable disease tracking is a core public health function. Because of the pandemic, you've gotten a glimpse into the importance of contact tracing and infectious disease monitoring. Normally, our infectious disease team members spend their time managing more common diseases, such as Hepatitis C, strep, influenza and an unfortunately high number of sexually transmitted diseases, including gonorrhea and chlamydia. Most staff time, however, is spent preventing diseases by giving routine immunizations to children and adults.

We rely on the community to get safe and standard immunizations on a schedule outlined by the CDC. When a population is about 95 percent vaccinated, the risk of getting a preventable disease drops dramatically. This is called “herd immunity.” Most vaccine-preventable diseases are spread from one person to another. If one person in a community gets an infectious disease, he or she can spread it to others who are not immune. However, a person who is immune to a disease because he or she has been vaccinated cannot get that disease and cannot spread it to others. The more people who are vaccinated, the fewer opportunities a disease has to spread.

Vaccines prevent deadly and debilitating diseases. For several generations now, vaccines have been proven to be safe and highly effective. We are hopeful that researchers can find a vaccine for COVID so that our community can gain herd immunity for this disease, too.

Because of COVID-19, we temporarily halted our immunization clinic. We are restarting immunization appointments next week on a limited basis and will be up to our regular capacity on July 1. To make an appointment, please call 309-793-7080. Children must be up-to-date on their vaccinations to attend school, so getting an appointment before school starts is important.

We also plan to host walk-in clinics later this summer. More information will be announced at a later date. Any visit to the Rock Island County Health Department is subject to social distancing requirements, and only one child and one guardian will be allowed in clinical rooms where the vaccination will be given. All other children must remain in a vehicle with supervision. All visitors to the health department will be required to wear a facial covering.

### **Rock Island County case count discrepancy resolved**

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

Regarding the discrepancy of one death reported earlier this week and two on Thursday by the Illinois Department of Public Health, we have reconfirmed the number of COVID-19 deaths in Rock Island County to be 28. The three people the state reported this week already were included in our count. Our total and the state’s total now match on IDPH’s website.

### **Other speakers without prepared remarks**

- Dr. Vikram Agrawal, pediatrician, UnityPoint Health - Quad Cities Muscatine
- Dr. Gautam Kukreja, pediatrician, Genesis Health System

### **More information**

- [www.TogetherQC.com](http://www.TogetherQC.com)
- [coronavirus.iowa.gov](http://coronavirus.iowa.gov)
- <https://www.dph.illinois.gov/covid19>

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