



**Quad Cities COVID-19 Coalition
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 4, 2020**

Current COVID-19 case count

Scott County – Total of 1,597

Total deaths in Scott County: 12

Rock Island County – 8 new cases since Monday; total of 1,645

Currently in hospital: 15

Total deaths in Rock Island County: 32

Today's call

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

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

Pandemic response part of public health

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

Since last Thursday's press briefing, the Iowa Department of Public Health has reported an additional COVID-19 related death of a Scott County resident, an elderly adult. My deepest sympathies go to this individual's family and friends. The virus continues to circulate in our community and our efforts to social distance and wear face coverings are our first line of defense to help slow the spread and protect our most vulnerable residents.

Public health departments all across our nation and world have lived and breathed COVID-19 since early this year. That means multiple months of planning for, communicating about, and responding to this novel virus that is like none we have seen. And in the midst of all of this work, we have had to find successful ways to do all of these tasks virtually.

The assessment, mobilization, communication, and investigation skills of our public health staff allow departments such as ours to respond to any and all public health threats, from flooding to COVID-19. While a public health emergency, such as a pandemic, cause public health systems to dedicate significant time and resources, at the same time public health departments have also continued to implement the broad programs and services that are foundational to public health. These include:

- required food service inspections
- providing immunizations to children in our community
- diagnosing and treating sexually transmitted diseases
- communicable disease follow-up
- animal bite investigations
- maternal and child health services and much more

These programs and services are helping protect our community from having to deal with outbreaks of childhood illnesses or foodborne illness while managing and recovering from the efforts of COVID-19.

Public health is going to remain in the forefront as our community continues to respond to the spread of COVID-19 and into the upcoming months as developments are made in the areas of treatments and a vaccine for COVID-19. Know that our departments and staff are fully committed to staying the course, protecting our communities, and providing you as much information as possible to make the best decisions of yourself and your family.

While we make this commitment, we hope you will commit to taking a role in protecting our communities by doing your part:

- Keep your distance when around others outside of your household - that means staying at least 6 feet apart from others when inside and outside
- Wear a face covering when you're out and about (not only to keep yourself from spreading the virus should you have it — but as a great visual representation of your support for the health of our community)
- Stay home when you are sick — we know that is hard, but it's a very important part of what we do to limit spread of this virus

Public health works every day to protect residents

Remarks from Nita Ludwig, administrator of the Rock Island County Health Department

COVID-19 takes most of our time, and we're working every day – including weekends – to keep our community as safe and informed as possible. However, our COVID-19 response isn't the only thing we have going. You just heard me say that we now have a total of 1,645 cases.

Before the pandemic, we started a strategic planning process that we are wrapping up now. During this process, we updated both our vision and mission statements. Both were written in January and seem prophetic now, but to me, it shows how the Rock Island County Health Department always is working on behalf of our residents:

Vision: Rock Island County Health Department works for the people of Rock Island and the Quad Cities to achieve health and wellness for everyone.

Mission: Rock Island County Health Department prevents disease, promotes wellness of mind and body, protects public health and prepares for emergencies.

You have been hearing about the COVID-19 work our infectious disease department is doing every day. You probably don't know we're dealing with a nationwide salmonella outbreak that is affecting local residents. We're still following up on dozens of infectious diseases reported to us every month.

You've heard about contact tracing in regards to COVID-19. While that term might be new to you, it is not to us. Contact tracing is Public Health 101. To control any infectious disease, we must have widespread testing and contact tracing. The idea is that letting people know they

have been exposed to an infectious disease so that they can isolate, change their behavior, and seek treatment if available. Our team is doing this tedious and important work.

We're still giving immunizations so children will be able attend school. Even if kids are not in the classroom, Illinois law requires they be up-to-date on their immunizations. We're here for that. Our pediatric clinic, the School Health Link, is doing physicals for children.

We're still inspecting restaurants. We're still making sure wells provide safe drinking water and that private septic systems are working properly. We're still inspecting tanning beds.

We're still case managing children who test high for lead. We're still working with our city partners to help families pay for getting their homes made lead safe through a multi-million-dollar HUD grant.

We're still offering safe sleep education and connecting pregnant women and their babies younger than 1 with resources to make their home environment and safe and healthy as possible.

We're still feeding moms, infants and children in our WIC program. In fact, our WIC team is working hard to transition from paper coupons to electronic swipe cards. We transition on Aug. 31, and our clients and staff are so excited! WIC puts much-needed food onto the table of Rock Island County residents. We know this is important every day, and with so many people out of work, it's even more important now.

So as you can see RICHD is working hard on your behalf every day. Please help us by doing your part to keep COVID-19 from spreading further by following the 3 Ws:

- Wear your mask
- Watch your distance – keep 6 feet from others
- Wash your hands

When one of our contact tracers calls you, please answer the phone. We are not sharing your confidential information. We are trying to control an infectious disease that has changed every aspect of the life we love. Please help us.

More information

- www.TogetherQC.com
- coronavirus.iowa.gov
- <https://www.dph.illinois.gov/covid19>
- <https://www.dph.illinois.gov/regionmetrics?regionID=2>
- <https://www.dph.illinois.gov/countymetrics?county=Rock%20Island>
- <https://www2.illinois.gov/idoc/facilities/Pages/Covid19Response.aspx>
- <https://www.dph.illinois.gov/covid19/long-term-care-facility-outbreaks-covid-19>

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