



**Quad Cities COVID-19 Coalition
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Nov. 5, 2020**

Current COVID-19 case count

Scott County – Total of 5,755

Total deaths in Scott County: 51

8 newly reported deaths: 5 adults ages 61-80; 3 adults age 80 or older

Rock Island County – 149 new cases since Wednesday; total of 5,089

Currently in hospital: 42

Total deaths in Rock Island County: 108

Today's call

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

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

Inside dining strongly linked with COVID-19 infection

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

As you know by now, all restaurants and bars in Illinois are closed for inside dining because of spiking COVID-19 numbers. The entire state has entered mitigation measures under the governor's Restore Illinois plan.

We understand how frustrating this is for business owners and patrons. But as with all decisions within the state's plan, there is a scientific reason behind it. A recent CDC study showed adults with a positive COVID-19 test were about twice as likely to have dined inside a restaurant than those adults with a negative test.

The reason for this is simple: when you are eating and drinking, you take off your mask. We know that masks dramatically reduce the transmission of the virus. We also know that the virus transmits more readily indoors than outside, which is why outside dining still is allowed under the state's plan. Some establishments are getting creative as the weather is becoming colder.

Rock Island County and all of Region 2 could come out of mitigation measures on Nov. 18 if metrics improve. Until then, please remember that our local businesses need your help. Getting takeout or delivery could be the lifeline they need while still reducing your chances of contracting the virus.

Iowa's Return to Learn program

Remarks from Edward Rivers, director, Scott County Health Department

Since our last briefing last Thursday, October 29, the Iowa Department of Public Health has reported 8 COVID-19 deaths of Scott County residents: 5 older adults (aged 61-80) and 3 elderly adults (>80 years of age). Our heartfelt sympathies go to the family and friends of these members of our community. We are increasingly concerned as more people in our community die as a result of this virus. Scott County's dangerously high daily case counts will cause even more deaths in the upcoming days and weeks.

In addition to a high number of deaths and a flood of positive cases in the last week, with some daily totals topping 160 cases, the 14 day average positivity rate for Scott County has increased to 16.7%. This number is important not just for general public health COVID-19 response, but for our school districts. Many in our community have expressed concern, and contacted us to ask what this means for schools.

School districts in Iowa are required to comply with Iowa's Return to Learn Plan.

The Return to Learn program does not require schools to move to remote learning when positive rates hit high levels. It also does not automatically authorize schools to move to remote learning when positivity rates increase.

Once a county reaches a 14-day average positivity rate of 15% or higher, school districts may request to move online for a 14 day period. The decision is made independently by each school district whether to apply for a remote learning authorization, which is submitted to the Iowa Department of Education and Department of Public Health. School districts make these decisions based on the experience in their school district and data from the local Health Department.

Questions regarding whether an exemption will be sought should be directed to your district's administration.

Should a school district decide to make an application, the request will be based on:

- The average positivity rate in Scott County during the past 14 days AND
- The percentage of absenteeism that exists in a school building and/or school district.

The application will be reviewed by the Iowa Departments of Education and Public Health and approved or denied based on these factors.

Our increasing concern for the rapid increase in positivity we are experiencing in our communities is shared by our local health systems. We are joined by the Chief Executive Officers of Genesis Health System, Doug Cropper, and UnityPoint Health – Trinity, Bob Erickson, who will share the significantly increasing challenges their hospitals are facing.

UnityPoint-Trinity asks for community's help

Remarks from Robert J. Ericksen, president and CEO, UnityPoint Health – Trinity

If the presence of COVID-19 in our communities is a marathon and not a sprint – then we are entering the hardest leg of this race to date. It's crucial for the Quad Cities to understand that the challenges we are facing are very real and urgent. The entire UnityPoint Health System is seeing an increase in COVID-19 hospitalizations. We continue to work closely with our community partners to ensure we have the necessary beds, equipment, staffing and PPE to safely care for our communities, whether it is COVID-19 or other illness or injury. We have plans in place should there be a need for additional coronavirus care. At this time, we are not diverting patients for care at other partner facilities.

Like other healthcare organizations, adequate staffing remains an issue for our system, with an increasing number of our staff out with COVID-19 associated with community spread or isolating at home. Additionally, our staff is both physically and mentally exhausted. They've been fighting this virus, and fighting for their patients, for eight months. They continue to show up every single day for you, your friends and your family. Try to tell an ICU nurse who has watched people die from this disease that masks don't work and that this is all a hoax.

The bottom line is: We need your help. We're at a critical point in our fight against COVID-19. It is going to take every one of us doing our part to get this virus under control. Let me put it this way — we are now seeing around 200 positive test results per day. And if about 10 percent of infections require a hospital stay, then we must be ready for about 20 new COVID inpatients every day which is unsustainable over a long period of time.

Please protect your family, your community, and your local health care workers by wearing a mask, washing your hands, staying home when you are sick, practicing social distancing and getting your flu shot. If we work together, we can reduce the COVID positivity numbers.

Genesis' 3 main metrics rising rapidly

Remarks from Doug Cropper, president and CEO, Genesis Health System

We at Genesis have talked about three concerns that could place additional pressure on health system resources and result in continued increases in hospitalization of COVID-19 patients.

Those concerns are:

- Increased hospitalization numbers
- High local positivity rates of symptomatic patients being tested
- High number of tests being ordered.

Here is a snapshot of past seven days:

Hospitalizations

DATE	PUI*	POSITIVE	TOTAL
Oct. 28	8	40	48#
Oct. 29	3	45	48#
Oct. 30	2	42	44
Nov. 2	1	46	47
Nov. 3	5	46	51#
Nov. 4	0	50	50
Nov. 5	0	56	56#

Indicates high since start of pandemic

*Person under investigation, also known as a suspected COVID-19 case

Positivity Rate of Symptomatic Patients Being Tested

Oct. 29: 22.78%

Oct. 30: 20.04%

Oct. 31: 27.14%

Nov. 1: 29.33%

Nov. 2: 28.80%

Nov. 3: 24.77%

Nov. 4: 25.79%

Test Orders from Genesis Health System

Oct. 29: 486

Oct. 30: 515

Oct. 31: 175

Nov. 1: 176

Nov. 2: 689

Nov. 3: 510

Nov. 4: 570

More information

- <https://www.scottcountyiowa.gov/health/post/do-masks-prevent-covid-19>
- <https://togetherqc.com/2020/10/mask-mandate-local-initiative/>
- 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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