



NEWS RELEASE

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Public Health Officials Announce More Than 80 COVID-19 Cases Now Associated with Youth Camp Outbreak

Secondary outbreak now connected with previously reported youth camp outbreak in central Illinois

SPRINGFIELD – The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) is now reporting 85 teens and adult staff at a summer youth camp held in mid-June in central Illinois tested positive for COVID-19. One unvaccinated, young adult was hospitalized. Although all campers and staff were eligible for vaccination, IDPH is aware of only a handful of campers and staff receiving the vaccine. The camp was not checking vaccination status and masking was not required while indoors. IDPH is reminding people about the importance of vaccination, including youth, as the Delta variant and other variants continue to spread.

“The majority of the 85 COVID-19 cases associated with the youth camp are among teens,” said IDPH Director Dr. Ngozi Ezike. “The perceived risk to children may seem small, but even a mild case of COVID-19 can cause long-term health issues. Additionally, infected youth who may not experience severe illness can still spread the virus to others, including those who are too young to be vaccinated or those who don’t build the strong expected immune response to the vaccine.”

A couple individuals who were at the camp also attended a nearby conference, which resulted in 11 additional cases. At least 70% of those cases were unvaccinated. The vaccines currently authorized in the U.S. have been shown to be effective among individuals who are fully vaccinated, even against the more transmissible and serious variants. Schuyler and Adams counties, where the outbreaks occurred, are seeing approximately 40% of their population fully vaccinated.

IDPH continues to assist local health departments involved in the youth camp and conference outbreaks and is working with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Specimens are being sought for genomic sequencing to determine if any of the cases were caused by variants.

Information about where to get a COVID-19 vaccination can be found at <https://www.vaccines.gov/>. CDC guidance adopted by IDPH for operating youth camps can be found at <http://www.dph.illinois.gov/covid19/community-guidance/operating-youth-camps>.

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