



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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24 Illinois Counties at Warning Level for Coronavirus Disease

SPRINGFIELD – The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) today reported 24 counties in Illinois are considered to be at a warning level for novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19). A county enters a warning level when two or more COVID-19 risk indicators that measure the amount of COVID-19 increase.

Twenty-four counties are currently reported at a warning level – Bond, Bureau, Cass, Clinton, Coles, Crawford, Cumberland, DeWitt, Edwards, Effingham, Greene, Jasper, Jo Daviess, Lawrence, Madison, Marion, Rock Island, St. Clair, Shelby, Washington, Wayne, Williamson, Wabash, and Union.

Although the reasons for counties reaching a warning level varies, some of the common factors for an increase in cases and outbreaks are associated with university and college parties as well as college sports teams, large gatherings and events, bars and clubs, weddings and funerals, long-term care facilities, correctional centers, manufacturing plants, schools, and cases among the community at large. General transmission of the virus in the community is also increasing.

Public health officials are observing people not social distancing, gathering in large groups, and not using face coverings. Some communities lack access to convenient testing before people become symptomatic. In some counties, local law enforcement and states' attorneys are not enforcing important mitigation measures like social distancing and the wearing of face coverings. Additionally, some people refuse to participate in contact tracing and are not providing information on close contacts or answering the phone.

Several counties are taking swift action and implementing mitigation measures to help slow spread of the virus, including increasing testing opportunities, stressing the importance of testing to providers, hiring additional contact tracers, working with schools, meeting with local leaders, and educating businesses and large venues about the importance of mitigation measures.

IDPH uses numerous indicators when determining if a county is experiencing stable COVID-19 activity, or if there are warning signs of increased COVID-19 risk in the county. A county is considered at the warning level when at least two of the following metrics triggers a warning.

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- **New cases per 100,000 people.** If there are more than 50 new cases per 100,000 people in the county, this triggers a warning.
- **Number of deaths.** This metric indicates a warning when the weekly number of deaths increases more than 20% for two consecutive weeks.
- **Weekly test positivity.** This metric indicates a warning when the 7-day test positivity rate rises above 8%.
- **ICU availability.** If there are fewer than 20% of intensive care units available in the region, this triggers a warning.
- **Weekly emergency department visits.** This metric indicates a warning when the weekly percent of COVID-19-like-illness emergency department visits increase by more than 20% for two consecutive weeks.
- **Weekly hospital admissions.** A warning is triggered when the weekly number of hospital admissions for COVID-19-like-illness increases by more than 20% for two consecutive weeks.
- **Tests performed.** This metric is used to provide context and indicate if more testing is needed in the county.
- **Clusters.** This metric looks at the percent of COVID-19 cases associated with clusters or outbreaks and is used to understand large increase in cases.

These metrics are intended to be used for local level awareness to help local leaders, businesses, local health departments, and the public make informed decisions about personal and family gatherings, as well as what activities they choose to do. The metrics are updated weekly, from the Sunday-Saturday of the prior week.

A map and information of each county's status can be found on the IDPH website at <https://www.dph.illinois.gov/countymetrics>.

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