



ITASCA COUNTY HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
ITASCA RESOURCE CENTER
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FEWER COVID CASES AND MORE VACCINATIONS GOOD NEWS FOR ITASCA COUNTY

(Grand Rapids, Minn., **Jan. 4, 2021**) – Itasca County is headed in the right direction, with new cases of COVID-19 slowing. To ensure that the trend continues and that any undiagnosed cases are caught before they can spread, Itasca County Public Health and Minnesota National Guard are offering free COVID-19 saliva testing on Jan. 6, 7 and 8, from 12:00 to 6:00 p.m. at Grand Rapids High School. Anyone can get tested, whether or not you’ve been exposed or have symptoms.

“I encourage all to consider testing,” said Itasca County Public Health’s division manager, Kelly Chandler. “A quick saliva test is an investment in protecting yourself, your family and your community. Even though we are seeing great progress in Itasca County, COVID still is in our midst and continues to take people we love. We can have no symptoms and still have the virus and put others at very serious risk.”

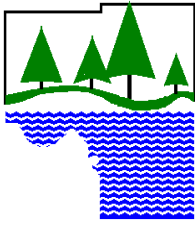
Appointments for COVID-19 testing may be made online at the following link: <https://mncovidtestingappt.as.me/schedule.php?location=Grand+Rapids+High+School>. For those not able to sign up online or who need an interpreter, call 1-800-800-5698.

As of Jan. 3, Itasca County residents testing positive for COVID-19 numbered 96 over 14 days and 39 over the past seven days. Local deaths have risen to 42. When measured as an average over 14 days for every 10,000 residents, the Itasca County rate as of Dec. 31 was 24.2, down from 129 in mid-November.

Also a dose of good news, 774 Itasca County health care providers and emergency management professionals have been vaccinated with either Moderna or Pfizer vaccines. Deliveries of vaccines are arriving in Itasca County weekly, with phases planned as supplies are available. As each new phase begins over the next months, the responsible facilities will make those announcements. To track progress, Minnesota Department of Health has created a new tool at its website here:

<https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/vaccine/stats/admin.html#distm1>

Itasca residents with questions or concerns may leave them at the Itasca County COVID message line, with calls returned 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday – Friday. The Itasca COVID line number is 218-327-6784. Current local data and information also can be found at the county’s website here: <https://www.co.itasca.mn.us/798/COVID-19-Coronavirus-Information>



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PHOTO CAPTION (above): Grand Rapids Police Chief Scott Johnson receives a COVID-19 vaccination from Itasca County Public Health’s Becky Tillma. More than 770 health care and emergency management workers have received their first doses of the vaccine in Itasca County so far.

Media briefing: Itasca County Health Department will host 30-minute press briefings on Thursdays at 10:00 a.m. as needed. The next scheduled briefing will be Jan. 7. Contact anna.anttila@co.itasca.mn.us for more information.

Itasca County Public Health media contacts

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