



ITASCA COUNTY HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
ITASCA RESOURCE CENTER
1209 SE 2nd Avenue, Grand Rapids, Minnesota 55744-3983
Hearing Impaired Number TDD: 218-327-5549
(218) 327-2941

Visit us at: www.co.itasca.mn.us

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ITASCA COUNTY IN RACE AGAINST COVID VARIANT

(Grand Rapids, Minn., **April 9, 2021**) – All three COVID-19 vaccines are now flowing through Itasca County’s network of health care facilities, pharmacies and public health clinics in a local race against variant-fueled spread of the coronavirus.

Over the past seven days, 71 new cases of COVID-19 were identified among Itasca County residents, following 108 identified the previous week. The 14-day rate per 10,000 Itasca residents is 42.

“It is clear that the highly contagious B.1.1.7 variant is blooming in our county, especially among younger residents,” said Kelly Chandler, Itasca County Public Health division manager. “Thankfully, we also have vaccines available to all residents 16 and older. In addition to protecting against hospitalization and death, vaccines offer assurance of a more normal spring and summer. I recommend getting vaccinated whenever and wherever you can, as soon as possible.”

More than 44 percent of eligible Itasca County residents have received at least a first dose of COVID-19 vaccine, with 11,544 completing their series so far. Among Itascans age 65 and older, 77 percent have received at least one vaccine dose.

A special clinic offering the single-dose Johnson and Johnson vaccine will be hosted Wednesday and Thursday, April 14 and 15 at Grand Itasca Clinic & Hospital in Grand Rapids for those over age 18 who meet the state’s Phase IB, Tier 4 criteria. This tier includes those 50 years of age regardless of current health status and those 16 or 18 years of age and older with certain conditions and disabilities. Call the Grand Itasca appointment line (218-326-7344) or by going online to MyChart.

Vaccines are regularly available in Itasca County at:

Bigfork Valley (Bigfork) – 16 and older, with appointments scheduled as vaccine supplies are available. Call 218-743-4444, option 4 or email COVIDWaitList@BigforkValley.org to be added to contact list.

Essentia Health Deer River (Deer River) – 16 and older, call 218-786-1750 or visit www.essentiahealth.org.



Grand Itasca Clinic & Hospital (Grand Rapids) and **Fairview Range (Hibbing)** – currently vaccinating those who meet the Minnesota Phase 1B, Tier 4 criteria, including those 50 years of age and older and those 16 years of age and older with certain conditions and disabilities. Both clinics open their schedules for Pfizer vaccines on Mondays at 9:00 a.m. This is when appointment availability is best, but vaccine appointments may be available throughout the week as well. Call Grand Itasca at 218-326-7344 or Fairview Range at 218-362-6937. Appointments for vaccines at either facility can also be made on MyChart.

Itasca County Public Health: working with specific groups and locations. Periodic public clinics announced at the department’s Facebook page and website.

Scenic Rivers Health Care clinics in Bigfork, Northome, Big Falls, Cook, Tower and Floodwood are vaccinating as supplies allow. Call [877-541-2817](tel:877-541-2817) .

Thrifty White Pharmacies (Grand Rapids): 16 or 18 and older (both Pfizer and Moderna available), www.thriftywhite.com. Those needing registration assistance may call individual locations.

Walmart Pharmacies: availability is updated daily at www.walmart.com, including for the Grand Rapids location.

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. Information about vaccination options and current local data and information may be found at the county’s website here: <https://www.co.itasca.mn.us/798/COVID-19-Coronavirus-Information>

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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 April 15.

Itasca County Public Health media contacts

Kelly Chandler (218-327-6144 and Kelly.chandler@co.itasca.mn.us)