



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

COVID RATES STAY LOW IN ITASCA COUNTY AS VACCINATIONS RISE

(Grand Rapids, Minn. – July 20, 2021) – Itasca County residents continue to drive rates of COVID spread down in the county as more and more residents are vaccinated. Only five new cases of COVID-19 have been identified among Itasca County residents over the past two weeks, bringing the 14-day rate per 10,000 residents to less than one.

Itasca County has seen an additional death due to COVID, a woman in her 20s.

“We know from experience that Itasca residents do not live in a bubble,” said Kelly Chandler, division manager, Itasca County Public Health. “We travel, we host visitors and eventually will see what other regions see. At this point, the virus’ Delta variant has yet to be identified in Itasca County or Northeast Minnesota, although it has been found in other areas of the state.

“Thus far, vaccinations are working to mitigate severe illness from variants. Delta is more contagious and affects younger people more so than previous strains of the virus. While Itascans have been doing a good job avoiding COVID spread, we are not done yet.”

Vaccination rates in the county have begun to rise again, with 56 percent of those eligible (ages 12 and over) having received at least their first dose, up from 54 percent. When considering the total population, including those younger than 12, the percentage of those vaccinated in Itasca County is 48.

Vaccines are widely available throughout the county, including at clinics and pharmacies. In addition, special vaccination events are regularly being held. On Thursday, July 22, those ages 12 and older may receive the Pfizer vaccine at Deer River High School Gymnasium between 9:00 a.m. and noon through a

partnership with Essentia Deer River. Consent and registration forms are available online at the ISD 317 website (<https://www.isd317.org/covid-vaccine-info>).

Also on Thursday, July 22, Itasca County Public Health is offering the Johnson & Johnson vaccine for those 18 and older at the Calumet Presbyterian Church between 4:00 and 5:30 p.m. Walk-ins are welcome.

A newly announced benefit to vaccination is that fully vaccinated U.S. residents will be able to enter Canada, effective Aug. 9. In addition, unvaccinated minors younger than 12 entering Canada with vaccinated parents or guardians will not have to quarantine for 14 days. Details may be found online at www.travel.gc.ca/travel-covid.

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 through Friday. The Itasca COVID line number is 218-327-6784.

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Note to media: An online press briefing via ZOOM is scheduled for Aug. 19, 2021, 10:00 a.m., with a focus on back-to-school plans for area schools.

Itasca County Public Health media contact: Kelly Chandler, 218-327-6144
and Kelly.Chandler@co.itasca.mn.us.