



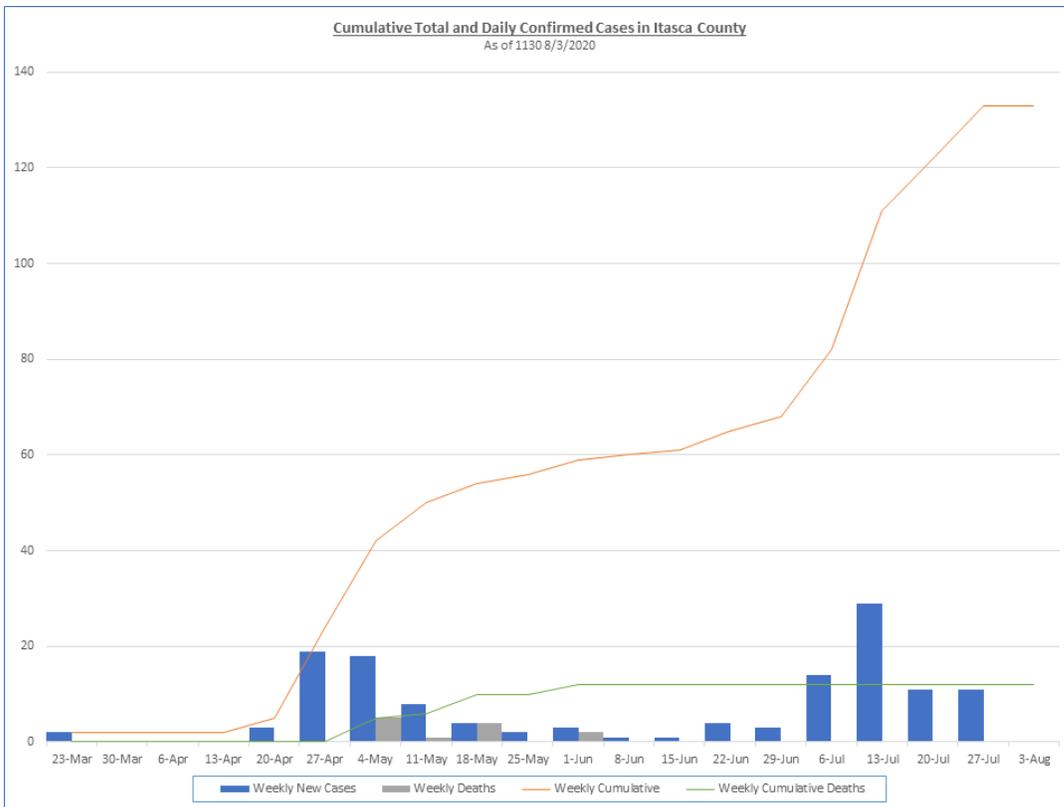
ITASCA COUNTY HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
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*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*

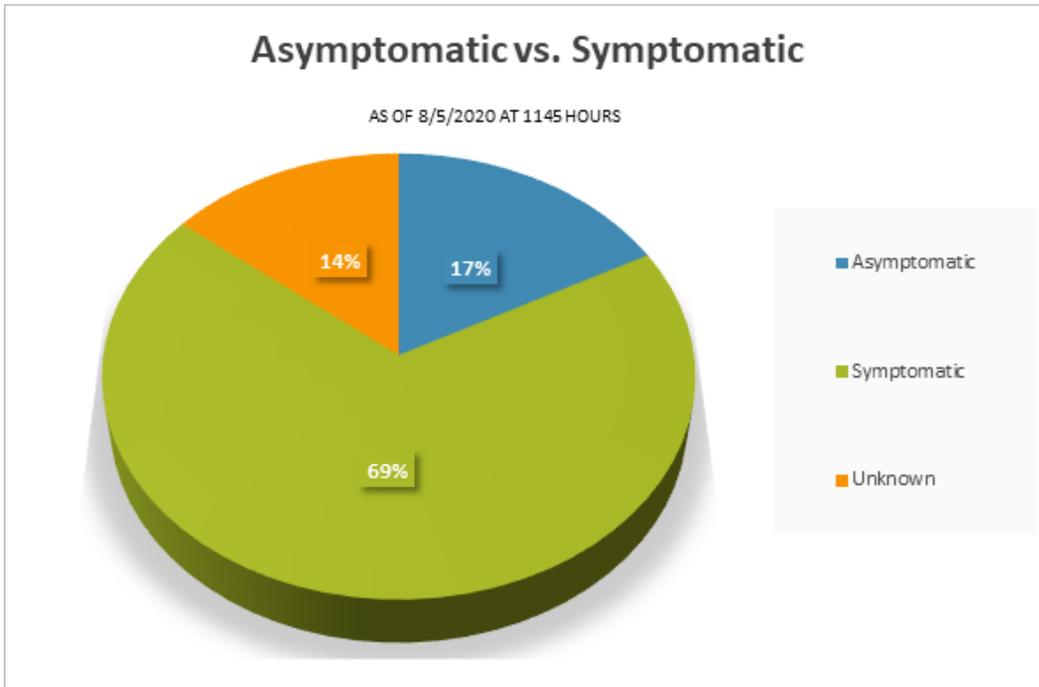
ITASCA COUNTY COVID-19 CASES SHOW SIGNS OF LEVELING OFF

(Grand Rapids, Minn., **August 7, 2020**) – Itasca County begins to see the end of the post-holiday spike in cases as it enters August. As of 11:00 a.m. on August 7, total cumulative laboratory-confirmed cases of COVID-19 among Itasca County residents stands at 136, with no additional deaths.



Source: Minnesota Department of Health, through Aug. 2, 2020.

Minnesota Department of Health has provided data that, as of Aug. 5, 17 percent of Itasca residents infected showed no outward signs of being sick (asymptomatic), 69 percent were symptomatic and for 14 percent it is unknown whether they were symptomatic or asymptomatic.



Source: Minnesota Department of Health, through Aug. 5, 2020

County by county data is a key factor in deciding how area schools will approach their fall programming. While recent case data suggests that Itasca County’s case rates are finally declining, the county’s most recent 14-day infection rate per 10,000 residents puts local school districts very close to the point of fewer options.

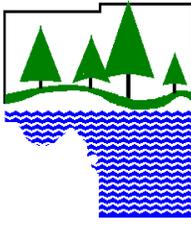
The most current data available (for July 12-25), puts Itasca County’s 14-day case rate per 10,000 residents at 9.96. At 10.00, policy guidance from the state would be, at a minimum, to move to a hybrid online/in-person model for middle school and high school students.

“Our schools’ and our students’ options depend heavily on our whole communities keeping case numbers down,” said Kelly Chandler, department manager for Itasca County Public Health. “We are working closely with every district to make informed choices based on local, current data. There is no doubt that safety is the first priority. Itasca County is fortunate to have strong, connected and innovative leaders in place in our schools.

“As we look forward to the remaining weeks of summer, it is critical that we are doing our parts to stop the spread of virus – wearing masks, avoiding large-group gatherings, washing our hands, social distancing. Another spike like we saw after the Fourth of July could be a disaster.”

Based on current knowledge, area districts say they are working toward the following:

- In-person learning with an online option is planned for all levels at Greenway, Bigfork, Grand Rapids and Nashwauk-Keewatin.



- Deer River plans to launch the year with a highly customized hybrid of online and in-person learning.
- Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School will be starting the year with an online-only approach.

Questions or concerns among Itasca residents may be directed to the Itasca COVID line, which is currently staffed 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday – Friday to address questions related to COVID-19, executive orders, etc. Messages left at other times will be returned during business hours. The Itasca COVID line number is 218-327-6784.

-END-

*Note to media: Itasca County Health Department will host 30-minute press briefings on Thursdays at 10:00 a.m. as needed. The August 20 briefing will focus on preparing students, families and schools for fall. Recordings available. Contact [anna.anttila@co.itasca.mn.us](mailto:anna.anttila@co.itasca.mn.us) for more information.*

Itasca County Public Health media contacts

Kelly Chandler (218-327-6144 and [kelly.chandler@co.itasca.mn.us](mailto:kelly.chandler@co.itasca.mn.us)) or Anna Anttila ([anna.anttila@co.itasca.mn.us](mailto:anna.anttila@co.itasca.mn.us)).

Helpful Links:

Itasca County Public Health press briefing, featuring all Itasca-based school district superintendents.

<https://www.facebook.com/ItascaCountyPublicHealth/videos/779490369464360/>

