



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

COVID-19 TAKES FOUR MORE ITASCA COUNTY RESIDENTS

(Grand Rapids, Minn., **March 15, 2021**) – Itasca County has lost four additional residents to COVID-19 over the past two weeks, two females in their 60s and 70s and two males in their 60s and 90s. A total of 51 Itascans have passed away due to COVID-19 in the past year.

“The COVID-19 battle is not yet over,” said Kelly Chandler, Itasca County Public Health division manager. “Too many remain in fights for their lives and families continue to grieve losses of loved ones. These deaths are painful reminders of why we continue to wear masks, keep social distance and follow public health guidelines. Stay strong, Itasca.”

After a quick dip in new cases last week, Itasca County is experiencing a new rise in COVID-19 diagnoses. Over the past seven days, 63 new cases have been identified and 94 over the past 14 days. When using the 14-day rate per 10,000 residents, Itasca County stands at a rate of 19.1, a rise from 14 just a week earlier.

On a positive note, vaccinations are consistently rising in Itasca County. Among residents age 65 and older, 76 percent have received at least their first dose of COVID vaccine. With expansion of priority groups into Phase 1a, Tiers 2 and 3 by Minnesota Department of Health, vaccines are increasingly available. More than one-fourth (27 percent) of adult Itasca residents have received at least a first dose of COVID vaccine.

Currently providing vaccines in the area are: Grand Itasca Clinic & Hospital, Essentia Health Deer River, Bigfork Valley, Scenic Rivers Health Services, Thrifty White Pharmacy, Walmart Pharmacy, Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe/Indian Health Services and Fairview Range. Itasca County Public Health’s website offers a convenient list of vaccinators and their contact information.
<https://www.co.itasca.mn.us/844/COVID-19-VACCINATION-INFORMATION>

Scenic Rivers Health Services in Bigfork currently has a significant number of vaccination appointments still available this week for priority groups through Phase 1b, Tier 3. Call 218-361-3297 for an appointment.

Essentia Health Deer River typically knows late on Thursdays or Fridays what their availability will be for the following week. Grand Itasca Clinic & Hospital opens new appointments each Monday at 9:00 a.m. Bigfork Valley continues to maintain a waiting list for vaccinations. Thrifty White and Walmart pharmacies both have rolling availability visible on their websites.



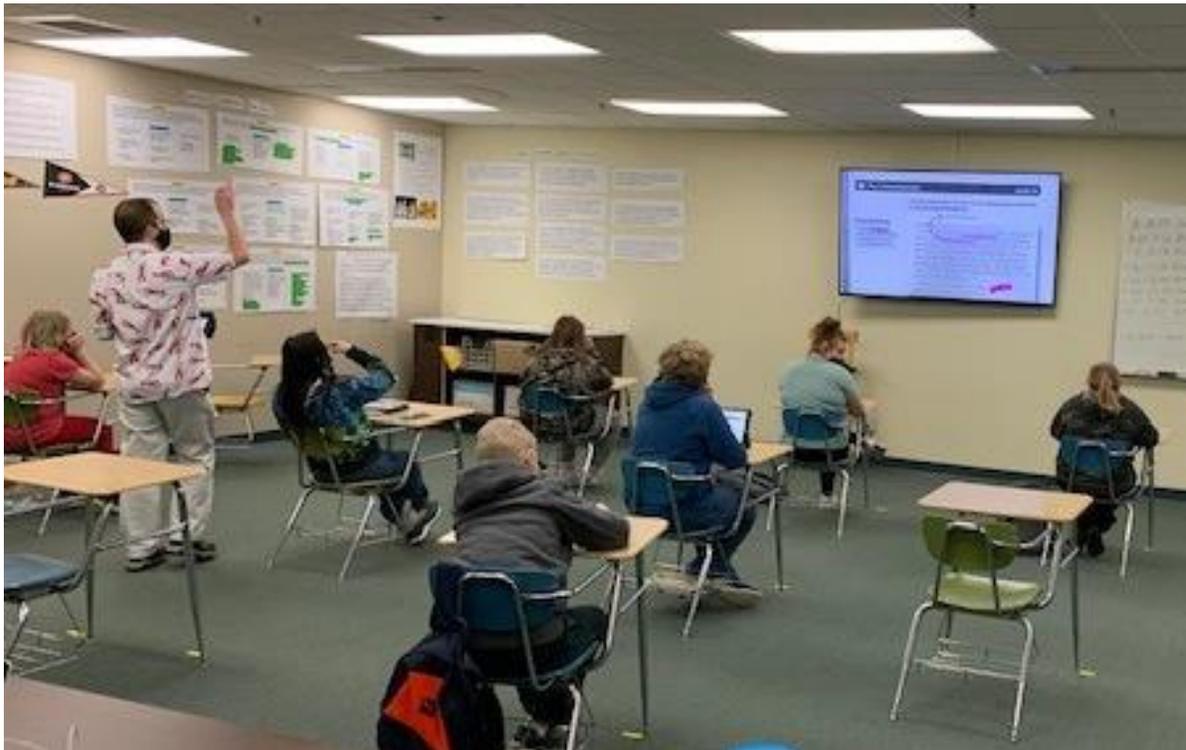
Itasca residents with questions or concerns may leave them at the Itasca County COVID message line, with calls returned 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday – Friday. The Itasca COVID line number is 218-327-6784. Information about vaccination options and current local data and information may be found at the 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 March 18.

Itasca County Public Health media contacts

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



[Caption: Deer River High School is transitioning to in-person learning after being in a hybrid model since the beginning of the school year. Photo credit: ISD317]