



809 Elm Street Suite 1200
Alexandria, MN 56308
800.450.4177 | 320.763.6018
320.763.4127 fax
horizonpublichealth.org

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Media Release: For Immediate Release

Horizon Public Health Advisory; Recent Rise in COVID-19 Cases

Horizon Public Health is reporting an increase of COVID-19 cases, a trend that has continued to be seen since the end of July. This increase is mirroring statewide trends, with 80 out of the 87 MN counties experiencing either 'substantial' or 'high' COVID-19 transmission, according to the CDC's data tracker (<https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#county-view>). Horizon Public Health's service area, Douglas, Grant, Pope, Stevens and Traverse counties, all currently fall into 'high' community transmission.

- The daily average confirmed cases has doubled in the past week from an average of 11 cases a day, to 22 cases a day across Horizon Public Health's service area
- A month ago the daily average confirmed cases was 3 cases a day across Horizon Public Health's service area
- Since August 1, 2021, the median age of those with a confirmed case is 37 years old
- Hospitalizations and ICU admits with confirmed COVID-19 cases have continued

As a result of this sustained spread in our communities, it is strongly recommended that people should take precautions by masking indoors, regardless of their vaccination status. These masking recommendations were issued earlier this month by the CDC amid the spread of the highly contagious Delta variant, which has become the predominant strain of the virus. According to the CDC, individuals who are fully vaccinated who get a COVID-19 breakthrough infection can still transmit the virus.

Horizon Public Health is urging residents to follow CDC recommended guidelines:

- Stay home if you are sick and get tested
- Everyone, regardless of your vaccination status, is strongly recommended to wear masks in public indoor settings in areas of 'substantial' or 'high' transmission of COVID-19
- If you are over 12, and able, get vaccinated as soon as possible
- If you are not vaccinated wear a mask when indoors with people outside your household

COVID-19 Testing Information: Individuals showing any sign or symptom of COVID-19 should get tested, regardless of vaccination status or prior infection. Asymptomatic persons exposed to COVID-19 should also get tested, regardless of vaccination status. Contact your healthcare provider for more information or visit MDH COVID-19 testing (www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/testsites/index.html) for further information.

COVID-19 Vaccine Information: Local providers are continuing to offer vaccine. For more information about vaccination locations in your community, visit www.horizonpublichealth.org or the Minnesota Department of Health's vaccine connector (<https://mn.gov/covid19/vaccine/find-vaccine/index.jsp>).

"The recent upward trend in new COVID-19 cases, including some breakthrough cases in those fully vaccinated, is a sign of increasing community spread, which is concerning. The vast majority of new cases in our community are unvaccinated. While not 100%, we know vaccines are very effective in preventing serious disease, hospitalizations and death, including against COVID-19 variants. We are at yet another critical point in this pandemic and this moment requires action." Kelsey Peterson, PHN, Horizon Public Health Disease Prevention and Control Supervisor.

Douglas County
809 Elm Street Suite 1200
Alexandria, MN 56308
320.763.4127 fax

Grant County
15 Central Ave N, PO Box 191
Elbow Lake, MN 56531
888.209.2887 fax

Pope County
211 E Minnesota Ave Suite 100
Glenwood, MN 56334
320.634.0159 fax

Stevens County
10 E Hwy 28
Morris, MN 56267
320.589.7433 fax

Traverse County
202 8th Street N, PO Box 23
Wheaton, MN 56296
320.563.0104 fax

Horizon Public Health continues to update the COVID-19 Statistics Dashboard weekly on Tuesdays and Thursdays. This information can be found on the Horizon Public Health's website at www.horizonpublichealth.org. If you have additional questions or need assistance, you can call the Horizon Public Health COVID-19 helpline at 800-450-4177 option 3, or visit our website at www.horizonpublichealth.org.