

## What's on the Horizon for Public Health



### Urgent, Urgency, Urgently

Definition of urgent. Something pressing or important; something that requires immediate attention; something that is compelling or imperative; a request that must be taken care of right away.

Last month the title for this article was *"COVID 19 a Shadow of Its Former Self...for now."* Progress was being made with every person who chose to protect themselves, and those around them, by getting vaccinated against COVID-19. That is still true, every shot in the arm helps. Unfortunately the Delta variant is significantly more infectious than the original strain of COVID-19. Delta is now the dominant version circulating in Minnesota, causing eight out of every ten COVID-19 cases in our state. This is cause for a sense of urgency for people who are not protected. In fact, this new outbreak is being called the pandemic of the unvaccinated.

With schools opening in the next few weeks, there is even more urgency to get everyone 12 years old and older vaccinated. Delta is more contagious than smallpox and as contagious as chickenpox. On average, one person will infect 8-10 other people with Delta. This is much higher than previous variants. We all want school to look and feel like pre-COVID-19. None of us wants to mask up again. Do you feel a sense of urgency to help make that happen?

The good news is we can fight back. There is a solution to this pandemic. It's called vaccination. We have three life-saving vaccines that are safe, free and highly effective: Pfizer, Moderna and Johnson and Johnson. And now, every person 12 and older who is vaccinated between July 30 and Aug 15 can receive a \$100 gift card. If a family of four age-eligible members each gets vaccinated that's \$400!

COVID vaccine is readily available by contacting your pharmacy, clinic or local public health agency. While there may be mild side effects, the benefits of receiving the vaccine significantly outweigh the risks of serious complications and death from COVID-19 disease. As an added bonus, your vaccination also helps protect your community, family and friends.

Collectively we can overcome COVID-19. Adopt a sense of urgency and take action. Get your children and yourself protected as soon as possible. For more information visit [www.health.state.mn.us](http://www.health.state.mn.us) or [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) or [www.horizonpublichealth.org](http://www.horizonpublichealth.org)

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