

Huron County Public Health

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Dear Huron County,

With Thanksgiving and other winter holidays quickly approaching, it appears that residents will continue to ignore the situation we find ourselves in and meet with family and friends inside of their homes to celebrate with one another. While we understand the strong desire to be around the people you love, possibly now more than ever, we are urging our residents to please reconsider. As COVID-19 cases continue to significantly increase throughout state, Huron County is rapidly moving in the wrong direction. This year, it is true that the safest Thanksgiving gatherings will include only people in your own immediate household and virtually meeting with others.

Over the last three weeks, the number of COVID-19 cases reported in Huron County has consistently doubled. It is at this time, as cases continue to increase, that we must consider that it may only be a short matter of time before Emergency Department visits, hospital admissions, and the percentage of Intensive Care Unit beds occupied also increase. Currently, our ongoing concern is if we don't control the spread of this virus, medical professionals will continue to get ill and hospitals won't have the staff available to respond to an increased number of COVID patients, or be able to care for others admitted for serious non-COVID-19-related health conditions.

It is anticipated that this kind of shift could happen within the upcoming weeks if current trends do not change. However, whether this projection is not as immediate as we assume, and we do not reach a critical level of hospitalizations over the next month, there is still a need to call upon all individuals in our county to strengthen their resolve in adhering to the appropriate public health protection measures that have been communicated throughout the course of the pandemic.

The uncontrolled spread we are experiencing is being driven by informal gatherings and get-togethers with family and friends where it's spread unknowingly by people who have the virus but do not have symptoms or have minor symptoms they write off as seasonal allergies or a cold. While we were fortunate to be able to get away with that behavior during the summer, the level of virus circulating in our county now is at an all-time high. These gatherings have proven to result in a widespread escalation of the number of people getting sick in our county.

The fact is, gathering in a group of people is risky right now, especially if you're over 55 or have an underlying medical condition. In general, the more people you interact with, the closer you are to them when you interact with them, and the longer that interaction, the higher your risk of getting and spreading COVID-19. That doesn't mean you have to lock yourself in a room and not enjoy what hopefully will be a nice weekend, but there are certain fundamental protective steps that you can take and still enjoy yourself.

This is a call to action to the population of Huron County. The rates of infection and hospitalization being reported now will at some point be the tip of the iceberg if you don't change how you are interacting with each other. I challenge residents to consider sacrificing the traditional style of hosting Thanksgiving this year, in hopes to have a more traditional Christmas celebration next month. The sacrifices being made and requested may be considerable, but it is what is required to prevent it from getting further out of control, overburdening our hospitals and causing more loss of life.

If you still decide to host guests, it is essential that you talk ahead of time about ways to keep the group safe, and make sure everyone understands why it's important. You can protect your friends and family and make your traditions safer by taking every precaution you can. We appreciate your assistance in helping all of Huron County combat the spread of the virus, and thank you in advance for your understanding of the aforementioned recommendations and your continued cooperation in achieving them.

Sincerely,



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