

MEDIA RELEASE



Date: July 24, 2020
To: All Media
From: LaSalle County Health Department
717 Etna Road
Ottawa, IL 61350
Contact: Jenny Barrie (ext. 74315)
Leslie Dougherty (ext. 74314)
Phone: (815) 433-3366
For Immediate Release

“County Level Risk Metrics – LaSalle County Moves to Orange Warning Level”

The LaSalle County Health Department is alerting residents that as of Friday, July 24, 2020, our County-Level COVID-19 Risk Metrics have been moved to orange. Orange status indicates there are warning signs of increased COVID-19 risk in the county. These metrics are intended to be used for local level awareness for each county’s progress during Phase 4 and will help local leaders, businesses, local health departments, and the public make informed decisions and promote healthy behaviors. Individuals, families, and community groups can use these metrics to help inform their choices about personal and family gatherings, as well as what activities they choose to do.

LaSalle County COVID-19 cases are on the rise. As of July 24th, we have had a total of 389 cases. Since July 5th, we have identified 165 cases, which is 42.4% of our total cases. In addition, per the county-level risk metrics provided by the Illinois Department of Public Health, emergency room visits for COVID-like illness (CLI) have more than doubled over the last few weeks. It is important our area understand how easily COVID-19 is actively spreading. LaSalle County is experiencing community spread of the virus, meaning that some people testing positive for COVID-19 are not able to pinpoint when or where they may have become infected. This is happening all over the county, not one particular area or town. In addition, there have been small clusters of cases among families and household contacts. Social and family gatherings, household sharing, and community spread have all contributed to the uptick in confirmed cases.

Another concerning trend, the high percentage of LaSalle County cases being identified in those 29 years and younger. LaSalle County Health Department Administrator Julie Kerestes wants to remind young people, “the COVID-19 pandemic is not over and it continues to be a serious public health threat. Young people can easily become infected with COVID-19, not experience symptoms and then pass the virus to others more at risk. Those who choose not to wear a mask or disregard the importance of social distancing are putting their parents, grandparents, co-workers, and community at risk.”

The Health Department is encouraging everyone to do their part and continue to recognize the role they play in helping LaSalle County slow the spread of COVID-19. It is necessary for all county residents to wash their hands, watch their distance (staying at least 6 ft. away from other people), and wear a face

covering. Face coverings are effective in preventing the spread of COVID-19 and are one of the best prevention tools available to the public at this time.

In addition to continuing to provide daily COVID-19 updates, the Health Department will begin sharing a weekly coalition bulletin with the public. Since March, the LaSalle County Health Department has been preparing a weekly bulletin that has been distributed to our community healthcare partners and coalition members. The bulletin was intended to help partners stay apprised of the ever-changing public health and emergency preparedness issues in our area related to COVID-19. As the pandemic has continued to evolve, we have started to include statistical data for our area as well. Beginning Friday, July 24th, we will share this bulletin on our website and social media pages every Friday. If someone would like to receive the bulletin directly, they may sign up to have the bulletin sent to their email. Please visit our website or social media pages to access to link to be added to the distribution list.

The LaSalle County Health Department encourages residents to stay informed on the COVID-19 pandemic. For questions, please contact the Health Department at 815-433-3366 or visit the Health Department's website at www.lasallecounty.org.

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