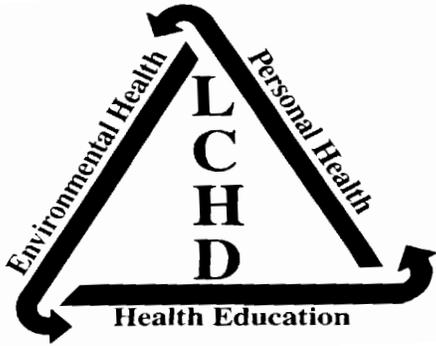


# MEDIA RELEASE



Date: October 23, 2020

To: All Media

From: LaSalle County Health Department  
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**For Immediate Release**

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

The LaSalle County Health Department is alerting residents that as of Friday, October 23, 2020, our County-Level COVID-19 Risk Metrics has been moved back to orange. As a reminder, orange status indicates there are warning signs of increased COVID-19 risk in the county. A warning level means that a county saw increases in two or more COVID-19 risk indicators.

LaSalle County has seen a concerning rise in our number of cases. In addition, per the county-level risk metrics provided by the Illinois Department of Public Health, the 7-day test positivity rate has risen above 8%. Until LaSalle County can get a handle on the number of new cases being identified each week and slow the community spread that is occurring, LaSalle County will continue to be at risk for remaining at the orange warning level.

	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Running Total
Number Cases	6	50	98	67	261	778	504	550	2314
% of total cases	0.26	2.16	4.24	2.90	11.28	33.62	21.78	23.77	100%

The department’s contact tracing efforts continue to show small clusters of cases among families and household contacts. Social and family gatherings, household sharing, workplace exposures, long-term care outbreaks and community spread have all contributed to the increase in cases. Getting together in groups, both small and large, without taking appropriate precautions such as social distancing and wearing face coverings is leading to increased transmission and will continue to lead us in the wrong direction. All residents are encouraged to wear a face covering, maintain 6 feet of social distance, wash hands frequently, avoid gatherings with people not in your household, and stay home when ill.

In addition, this year it is more important than ever to get a flu shot. Getting a flu vaccine can help you avoid co-infection with COVID-19 and flu. It takes the body several weeks after receiving the vaccine to build up antibodies that will help protect you from flu, so get it now to help protect you and others. Roll your [#SleeveUp](#) and get your flu shot.

The LaSalle County Health Department also recommends that anyone who has attended a large event or a social gathering where social distancing was not being practiced to monitor themselves for symptoms. We advise anyone who has had exposure to these types of situations to consider being tested for COVID-19, 5-7 days after the event or immediately if they begin to develop symptoms.

The county-level 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. The risk factors include several indicators that are monitored by the Illinois Department of Public Health in order to measure the health burden of COVID-19 in each county and aid in determining the county's ability to respond to the virus. The measures are updated on a weekly basis and are based on the timeframe of Sunday to Saturday of the week prior. The metrics are compared to a target value or expected trend. Each county is assessed to determine whether it is meeting or exceeding each indicator target. Using a color-coded system, counties will be able to determine whether they are meeting or not meeting set targets. Blue indicates that the county is experiencing overall stable COVID-19 metrics, while orange indicates there are warning signs of increased COVID-19 risk in the county.

The eight metrics used to measure COVID-19 rates at a county level are:

- **New cases per 100,000 people.** If there are more than 50 new cases per 100,000 people in the county, this triggers a warning.
- **Number of deaths.** This metric indicates a warning when the weekly number of deaths increases more than 20% for two consecutive weeks.
- **Weekly test positivity.** This metric indicates a warning when the 7-day test positivity rate rises above 8%.
- **ICU availability.** If there are fewer than 20% of intensive care units available in the region, this triggers a warning.
- **Weekly emergency department visits.** A warning is triggered when the weekly visits to Emergency Departments for COVID-19-like-illness increase by more than 20% for two consecutive weeks.
- **Weekly hospital admissions.** A warning is triggered when the weekly number of hospital admissions for COVID-19-like-illness increases by more than 20% for two consecutive weeks.
- **Tests performed.** This metric is used for context and increased awareness of testing resources, but is not a metric that is used to trigger a county warning. Test positivity at or under 8% indicates there is sufficient testing. If the test positivity exceeds 8%, then the number of tests is considered insufficient.
- **Clusters.** This metric looks at the percent of COVID-19 cases associated with clusters or outbreaks and is used to understand a large increase in cases. It is also an indicator of successful investigation of cases to a known source. This is not a metric that is used to trigger a county warning.

The LaSalle County Health Department encourages residents to stay informed on the COVID-19 pandemic. Anyone interested in receiving the Health Department's weekly coalition bulletin directly, 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. For questions or to schedule a flu shot, please contact the Health Department at 815-433-3366. For additional information, visit the Health Department's website at [www.lasallecounty.org](http://www.lasallecounty.org).

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