



## NEWS RELEASE

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### McLeod County Public Health encourages compliance with COVID-19 restrictions

**McLeod County-** McLeod County Health and Human Services is urging residents to avoid gatherings of people from outside your household, wear a mask in public places and wash your hands frequently as ways to slow the rampant spread of COVID-19 in our area.

"With as prevalent as the community spread is right now, if people don't consistently do these things, the situation will get much, much worse," says Berit Spors, McLeod County Health and Human Services Director. "Each of us can make simple choices to help reduce the number of positive cases and ultimately the number of deaths. They may not always be easy choices, but they are certainly the right choices."

The number of positive COVID-19 cases, the number of COVID-19-related deaths and the number of associated hospitalizations have all increased rapidly in the region over the last several weeks. McLeod County now has a new dashboard that breaks this data down more locally. The data comes from the Minnesota Electronic Disease Surveillance System (MEDSS) where information is securely entered on COVID-19 positive cases. This local dashboard is based on the Minnesota dashboard and was created with the help of McLeod County Highway Department Geographic Information System (GIS) division. Public Health and GIS staff will work to update it each week, with updates occurring every Tuesday. You can find this new dashboard on the McLeod County website to the left of page by clicking on the dashboard icon at <https://www.co.mcleod.mn.us/>

#### Health and Human Services Building

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[www.co.mcleod.mn.us](http://www.co.mcleod.mn.us)



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"Healthcare facilities, including hospitals, clinics and long-term care sites, are being stretched; specifically, because of the large number of their staff members who have come down with the virus," says Eric Weller, Regional Healthcare Preparedness Coordinator for the South-Central Healthcare Coalition. "That means not only are there fewer staff members to care for COVID-19 patients, but also for day-to-day patients such as those involved in motor vehicle crashes or those experiencing a heart attack."

Weller and Spors encourage people to stay home as much as possible, stay at least 6 feet from other people if you are in public places, tele-work if you can and avoid close contact with people who are sick. In addition, if you are 65 and older or have certain underlying medical conditions, stay at home and avoid situations where you could be exposed, including travel.

"We know this isn't easy, and we know none of this is fair," says Spors. "Unfortunately, we are going to have to endure some short-term hardship and inconvenience, at least until a vaccine is available."

Details about the availability of an effective COVID-19 vaccine are still being worked out, but state and federal officials have expressed optimism that some vaccine may be available by the end of the year to some of the population.

The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) is working in partnership with communities to provide safe and free on-site COVID-19 testing in areas with outbreaks or increasing cases. The Armory in Hutchinson, Minnesota has been designated as a community testing site and you are encouraged to make appointments prior to going to the site. More information for community testing can be found here: <https://mn.gov/covid19/for-minnesotans/if-sick/testing-locations/community-testing.jsp>

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