

Public Safety Alert!

September 1, 2020
Osage County, Missouri
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Health Department

This is Susan Long with the Osage County Health Department in Linn. I wanted to provide you with an update on Covid in the county. With return to school on all levels from preschool through college/university, we have seen a definite increase in not only the number of cases of Covid-19, but in the number of contacts also. As of close of yesterday, we have 82 cases, 1 death, 12 active cases with 69 recovered. I did a visual breakdown of where cases are at by a district map I found of Osage County. The Chamois, Deer, Morrison area has had 6 cases. Frankenstein, Bonnots Mill and Loose Creek has had 17 cases. Linn, Hope and Freedom area has had 18 cases. The Bland/Belle area has had 4 cases. Westphalia, Rich Fountain, Freeburg and Argyle area has had 35 and the Meta, St. Thomas, Folk area has had 2 cases. Our case count is only for lab-confirmed cases. We have followed almost 500 contacts so far. Over 1,500 people have been tested from the county. This means that these people either had symptoms suggestive of Covid or had been exposed to it. Only 1 school has not had a case or contact associated with it. There have been 38 males and 44 females diagnosed with Covid in the county thus far. Interestingly enough, the 21-30 year old age bracket has had the most cases followed by the 51-60 year old age bracket. The last few weeks has seen a surge in the numbers of younger people under 45 who have been diagnosed with Covid-19. This group has for the most part, had many more contacts as they seem to socialize more. While we have seen a few cases at STC with back to school, most of those age groups have been people not attending STC.

I wanted to report to you today that the commissioners and I extended the Phase 2 advisory through October 6th. My reason for this is because of the huge number of contacts we are presently investigating and following, in addition to the growing numbers of cases. I made a few minor changes in the advisory. One is for Restaurants, Dining Rooms, Bars and Pubs and Coffee Shops where I have a strong message that encourages all eateries and taverns to post signage asking people to not enter with signs or symptoms of COVID. This is highlighted in red on page 9. I also added a section on Isolation and quarantine responsibilities for both the health department as well as the cases, contacts, general public and ANYONE being tested. This is being posted on our website as well as the Osage County EMD website and the county website. In addition, I have some graphics to provide to you which will be posted on the site as well.

From the 3 investigations that I did this morning, I want to ask anyone who was in Caspers on 8/24 or 8/26 to please monitor themselves for illness as we did have a prolonged time period of a case in the store those days. I am also asking that if you were in Thriftway or at the Linn Dollar General on 8/26/2020 to monitor yourself for symptoms of COVID through September 9th and report any symptoms to your health care provider as a symptomatic case was also in both stores for a time period. Please do not contact the businesses or health department in regards to these even if you were in the businesses on those dates. Just watch yourself and contact your health care provider if you have any symptoms of COVID.

I've heard a few people continue to express the opinion that COVID isn't any worse than the flu. The biggest, easiest-to-see difference is that we have a vaccine for the flu and we don't have one yet for COVID. Until then, we will continue to see the numbers climb.

I continue to invite you to call with questions or concerns especially businesses, schools and churches. The questions have been interesting and force me to think beyond this week such as for Halloween, for example. This will continue to be an interesting year for all of us and the only way we can get through this is TOGETHER with everyone doing their part.

Thank you for your time!