

Public Safety Alert!

March 20, 2020
Osage County, Missouri
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Health Department

Smart911/Osage County Public Safety Alert:

Good Afternoon, again. This is Susan Long with the Osage County Health Department. We are hearing a lot of unfortunate and definitely inaccurate rumors flying about the community which I wanted to address before the weekend.

1. At this time, the health order is restricting no more than an organized group of 9 that can be together in the same place at the same time. This means- don't take your family of 20 to a restaurant. Frankly, this seems to be a moot point as they have all VOLUNTARILY gone to take-out only or drive-through and, of course, always have the option of closing themselves down during this time period. The governor is trying to keep businesses open AS AM I. Is it possible that circumstances might change due to unexpected events? Of course. I will send out a mass message through the 911 system at that time which will include Facebook and their website as they are able to update more quickly than our health department website. Please use the common sense I know you have and continue to use social distancing. I am NOT shutting the bars down. Again, no big groups and do social distancing which I think most people are doing anyway.
2. Yes, we have had some people in the county tested. NO, at the time of this update, I do not have any positive cases to report. I do have at least 2 that I am aware of on which results are pending. These people are self-isolating and their families are self-quarantining because they are concerned and don't want to pass anything onto anyone else. Again, please remember that we are still seeing numerous cases of influenza A & B as well as summer colds and allergies thanks to the intermittent warm days we've experience. Please do not call us to ask for information on those tested or who are being tested. It will not be shared by us. Should we get a positive case in the county, I will announce it quickly.
3. I am NOT shutting down the daycares in the county. My staff has been out and visited with each and every one of them that we are aware of, to check if they had the supplies that they needed and to answer any questions that they had. It is important to all of us that childcare options are available especially for those of us who are needed to be at work during this time. The division of childcare regulation has enacted the emergency school closing rule that is allowing daycares to accept up to 1/3 additional children during this extraordinary time period. Some daycares might choose to close as the parents of the children in the daycare are asked to not come to work. The daycare can choose to close, but again, I am not ordering this.
4. The schools closed earlier this week but are offering school lunch to children. The children do have to accompany the adult to pick up the food because this is a federal rule and not the schools being foolish. If the rules are violated, the school(s) could lose funding for this program.
5. Again, I would ask that you sign up for the Smart911 program so you can get these messages right away. Encourage anyone from the county that you know to do so also. This is a time saver if you do have an emergency as your information that you provided pops up for the 911 operator and you also get warnings about other disasters such as flood warnings and tornado warnings or even unplanned road closures due to accidents. You can access correct information in a timely manner rather than possibly getting information from people who don't know ANYTHING about what they are talking about.
6. If we can all work together and follow the directives, the hope is that it will get this under control quicker so we can all get back to our normal lives. We all know someone who thinks the rules apply to everyone but them. If you see someone not following the recommendations, let THEM know that you don't approve! I'm trying to appeal to common sense and respect for others well-being.
7. Again, if you have any symptoms, call your health care provider first for directions on what to do. If you are having problems breathing, call 911 and let them know your symptoms. If you have been tested and are awaiting results yet, but are getting worse and need to call 911, let the 911 operator know this. It will help with the decision on

how to treat you that much faster. If you are taking yourself or someone else to the ER, call the ER first so they can be prepared to take care of you quickly.

8. Continue to practice hand washing and social distancing. It works! Look at China getting back to normal now!
9. Check the CDC site for newest updates. If you don't get your answer there, call the HOTLINE number at 877-435-8411. If you still don't have your answer, call us at 897-3103. We'll do our best to answer your questions and address your concerns.

Thank you.