

To the Residents of Hancock County;

The following statement was developed jointly with the Hancock County Health Department, Hancock County Emergency Management, and Hancock Health.

We have reached a critical point in Hancock County's journey through the pandemic. Today, our county will be designated a "red" county by the Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH). Nearly 500 people per day are requesting COVID testing in our county and of those, 100 routinely receive positive results. Hancock County has had more than 3,500 residents infected by the coronavirus since the beginning of the pandemic in March, but more than 2000 (60%) of those cases have occurred in the last month. Tragically, more than 20 of the 67 deaths from COVID in our county have been in the last five weeks.

While the hospital is attempting to decrease the number of COVID patients requiring admission by providing quick access to monoclonal antibody infusions (dozens have now been treated), and the health department is contact tracing as quickly as it can to ensure those potentially infected can self-isolate and reduce the potential spread, their staff are at risk of becoming overwhelmed.

To avert this, we are strongly advising the following actions on the part of county residents:

- Limit non-essential contact with people outside your home, and when you do need to interact with others, do so safely by avoiding crowds (or greater than 25 people at any one time), physically distancing, wearing your mask, and washing your hands.
- If you own a business that operates indoors, require your employees to wear masks and encourage your customers to wear masks as well.
- Utilize the many fine restaurants in our county, but consider takeout instead and avoid times when the establishment is crowded.
- If a contact tracer reaches out, please take the call and understand the very real impact you can have by following their advice.
- Stay home if you are sick, waiting for a test or have been advised to close contact quarantine for the recommended time period.
- Ask your health care provider about the vaccine and make plans to get it as soon as it is available

The economy of Hancock County is growing quickly, and in the long term, the pandemic will be just a (large) blip in that growth. That said, we have the ability to reduce the impact of the disease in our region by taking common sense steps that we know work, and encouraging our family, friends, neighbors, and co-workers to do the same.

Together, we can take steps now that will not only benefit our community, but will see us through to the end of the pandemic more easily.



John Jessup, President
Hancock County Board of Commissioners