

Cass County Health Department is releasing the following Public Service Announcement:

The Illinois Department of Public Health released a new map on [June 25th](#) that illustrated Cass County's increased risk of new COVID infections. Cass County is the only County in the state that is currently indicated as increased COVID-19 risk. This system assesses metrics from the past week for positive cases. Cass County's rates in the past week are more than triple the acceptable rate for the state of Illinois. The purpose of this map is to allow more detailed local data to reach the public so that they can make informed decisions on whether it is safe to host or attend public events or gatherings, go out to eat, or relax efforts with regards to social distancing. The map can be found at this link:<https://www.dph.illinois.gov/countymetrics>. Overall since Illinois started reporting cases of Covid-19, Cass County is currently 9th out of 102 counties in Illinois with highest case rates per capita.

In the past week, Cass County Health Department has reported our first outbreak in a long term care facility and our first death. While some may feel this is a situation that effects only the people involved, it is important to remember that COVID cases were present in Cass County before that outbreak. Community transmission was likely the source of that outbreak as it is the source of the majority of Cass County's cases. It only takes one individual who has COVID (with or without symptoms) to set off a chain reaction to dozens or even hundreds of new cases. This long term care facility outbreak only highlights and mirrors what has been happening in our communities; we all shop, get gas, and eat out at the same locations. Covid-19 is present in our community regardless of where you work.

When you look at gatherings, indoor or out; the potential is there that the spread of COVID will be encouraged by careless attitudes toward wearing a mask, failing to social distance, or doing any of the things that we know increases risks of spread. With the holiday weekend upon us, we urge the people of Cass County to make smart choices to protect yourself, your neighbor, and your community. Enjoy the holiday in small groups while wearing a mask and social distancing, and please understand that COVID has not disappeared simply because things have started to open up. It is up to every individual to make choices that ensure that our hard work up to this point is not undone.

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