

CLARK COUNTY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

John Ross, Director
Clark County Courthouse
517 Court Street, Room 306
Neillsville, WI 54456

Ph: 715-743-5100
Fax: 715-743-4350
Cellular Ph: 715-429-0669
john.ross@co.clark.wi.us

For Immediate Release

April 17, 2020

Brittany Mews-Clark County Health Department Director/Health Officer

John M. Ross-Clark County Emergency Management Director

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update

Clark County, WI. Clark County continues to work through issues and concerns regarding the Coronavirus (COVID-19) response. Clark County issued a Public Health Emergency Declaration on March 16, 2020 which was affirmed by the Clark County Board of Supervisors at a meeting held on March 26, 2020. This declaration allows designated Clark County officials to take actions necessary and expedient for the health, safety, protection, and welfare of persons and property. This situation continues to evolve, and there are changes in information and guidance coming out frequently.

As of April 17, 2020, Clark County has 16 confirmed positive cases of COVID-19, an increase of 8 cases since April 14, 2020. Three of the individuals whom tested positive were hospitalized at one point. There are currently 0 deaths due to COVID-19 in Clark County. The true number of infected individuals is likely much higher than the actual number of positive (confirmed) cases. We can only report numbers of those who are tested and get a lab-confirmed positive test result. Individuals can infect others with COVID-19 even if they are not showing symptoms. Clark County Public Health Officer Brittany Mews adds, "Please know the health and safety of all community members is our highest priority. I'm urging Clark County residents to please stay home. We are working extremely hard to protect you. By staying home and following Governor Evers' order, you are helping to save lives. Thank you for your continued cooperation and patience during this difficult time. We will get through this together."

Healthcare providers are encouraged to obtain COVID-19 testing for all who are symptomatic, even patients with **mild** symptoms. This serves an important public health purpose in the next phase of Wisconsin's COVID-19 response, which will require aggressive efforts for finding and isolating cases in the community. Although overall testing capacity has increased, there is still regional variation in the availability of testing supplies and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) needed to perform the testing.

On April 16, 2020, Governor Evers announced an extension of Wisconsin's Safer at Home Order which will now be in effect until May 26, 2020. We continue to encourage people to follow the rules set by the Safer at Home Order, continue social distancing, and limiting face to face interactions. The restrictions established by the Safer at Home Order will remain in effect until May 26, 2020 or until modified by a superseding order. "The orders are legal due to the time, place, manner and the content being neutral, meaning they affect all citizens. Under the circumstances, they are reasonable efforts to be enforced for

the greater good of communities and protecting the citizens we serve.” said Clark County Sheriff Scott Haines.

A copy of the order along with a frequently asked questions (FAQ) document can be found on the Clark County website at <https://www.clarkcountywi.com/>. This order does reduce some of the prohibitions in the initial Safer at Home Order which are provided in the copy and FAQ shown on our website. As part of our efforts, we have established a webpage and continue to provide information including resource lists and links to other websites for official information. Clark County case numbers are updated on this page daily as well.

The need for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) continues to be a challenge. Supplies are in high demand and sources to obtain these items are having difficulty filling requests. Clark County has received several donations from schools and other businesses of supplies which have proven to be very helpful. “I wish to thank the schools and the families which provided the supplies in support of their students along with the businesses who have provided materials for the donations we have received. The work being done to support our response is a credit to our communities.” said Clark County Emergency Management Director John Ross. We continue to work on obtaining needed PPE through various sources.

Access to County facilities continues to be limited to essential visits by appointment only. Persons who need to do business with a County Department should contact that department directly for instructions on how to address their needs. County agencies continue to function and employees are utilizing telecommuting and adjusted work schedules to reduce the number of employees on site. There have been some updates to services including the Clark County Shared Ride Taxi and Neillsville Shared Ride Taxi, which are still in operation. Several protocols have been set in place to make sure that riders and drivers remain safe during this time. Multi-passenger rides have been discontinued. Riders are being asked to ride in the back seats whenever possible to separate themselves from the driver. Also, face coverings are encouraged to be worn as recommended by the CDC and a protocol for the cleaning of vehicles between trips has been implemented.

This is a rapidly evolving situation and updates will be provided as new information becomes available. People are encouraged to access the Clark County COVID-19 Information page as described above as well as following the Clark County Health Department on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/clarkcohealthdept/>) for daily case count updates and other information related to the current situation.

#END#