

DISTRICT HEALTH DEPARTMENT #10 LAUNCHES DIGITAL COVID-19 CASE NOTIFICATION AND INVESTIGATION SURVEY

DHD#10 asking for help from those undergoing testing

December 4, 2020 - In the span of seven days from Thanksgiving through Wednesday December 2, District Health Department #10 (DHD#10) reported a total of 1,019 COVID-19 cases in our ten- county jurisdiction. As we continue to witness a rapid increase in the number of new daily cases, there continues to be a strain on the resources to respond timely. The capacity of the public health system to keep up with case investigation and contact tracing shifted last month to address the highest priority populations for case investigation. Priority is being given to school aged children, residents and employees of long-term care facilities, hospitals, schools, large group settings, other higher-risk situations and the elderly.

“We recognize that we also must meet the needs of those that fall outside the priority populations,” states Kevin Hughes, Health Officer. In order to both gather and share important health information as quickly as possible, DHD#10 has adopted a new online survey to conduct case investigations with individuals that receive positive COVID-19 test results and fall outside the current priority populations. “This is another tool to support our public health response in order to initiate isolation and quarantine as soon as possible because any delay to this process can result in unnecessary spread” explains Hughes.

Starting today, DHD#10 will be uploading new COVID-19 cases into our electronic survey system which will then send a text message to the individual. The survey only asks for information that is allowable under the Public Health Code and Health Insurance Portability and Accountability (HIPAA) Privacy Act, such as demographics, symptoms, occupation, attendance at public events or gatherings, and people with whom they may have been in close contact. The survey *does not* gather any private information like social security numbers, personal passwords, or banking details.

Individuals between the ages of 23 to 64 years will receive an electronic message asking them to fill out a confidential survey. Individuals aged 22 and under and those 65 years and older will continue to receive a phone call from the health department to complete case investigation. DHD#10 urges residents to participate in the notification survey. Once the survey is complete, a link is provided where the participant can go to review COVID-19 education resources on isolation and quarantine as found at: <http://www.dhd10.org/covid-19-now-what/>

DHD#10 is working very hard to reach out to individuals as quickly as possible, but we do not want you to wait to be contacted prior to taking action. DHD#10 is asking the public for patience and to follow these guidelines:

If you were notified that you tested positive for COVID-19:

- [Self-isolate](#) for 10 days. After 10 days, if your symptoms have improved and you have not had a fever for 24 hours (without the use of medications), you may return to normal activities.
- Notify all your [close contacts](#) immediately.
 - A close contact is someone who was within 6 feet of an infected



MEDIA CONTACT

Jeannine Taylor
Public Information Officer
O: 231-876-3823
C: 231-920-4998
E: jtaylor@dhd10.org



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person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period* starting from 2 days before illness onset (or, for asymptomatic patients, 2 days prior to test specimen collection) until the time the patient is isolated.

If you were notified that you were a close contact to a positive case:

- [Self-quarantine](#) for 14 days beginning the first full day after the last date of exposure to the positive case.
 - Self-quarantine can be shortened to 10 days from the day after your last contact with someone infectious with COVID-19 ONLY IF:
 - You do not develop any symptoms or clinical evidence of COVID-19 infection during daily symptom monitoring for the 10 days after your last exposure; AND
 - You continue to monitor your symptoms daily for the full 14 days after the last exposure
- Consider getting tested, especially if you develop symptoms of COVID-19
- If you get tested and results are negative, you still must complete your 14-day quarantine or the shortened 10-day quarantine before resuming normal activities.

If you have recently been tested for COVID-19 due to symptoms or an exposure:

- [Self-isolate](#) in your home as though you have COVID-19 while waiting for your test results.
- Make a list of your close contacts beginning two days prior to symptoms or from your test date in the event that your test is positive.

“Cases of COVID-19 are higher than they have been at any point in this pandemic and continue to increase at alarming rates. We urge everyone to be empowered and choose to do the right thing by following isolation orders if positive, follow them if you’re seeking testing due to symptoms, and quarantine if you’re identified as a close contact,” stated Dr. Jennifer Morse, Medical Director for DHD#10. “Now is the time for all of us to take personal responsibility for ourselves, our families, our friends, and our communities to slow the spread of this virus.”

For more information on COVID-19, go to www.dhd10.org/coronavirus. You can also send questions to covid@dhd10.org.

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