

Contact: Michelle Clausen Rosendahl
Siouxland District Health Department
1014 Nebraska St, Sioux City, IA 51105
Phone: 712-279-6119 | Fax: 712-279-2601
mclausen@siouxlanddistricthealth.org

For Immediate Release:
April 24, 2020

Press Release

COVID-19 Case Surge in Woodbury County

Woodbury County is seeing a significant increase in confirmed cases of COVID-19. On April 17, there were 27 confirmed cases. Today, one week later, we reported 129 new cases for a total confirmed case count of 287. Siouxland District Health Department is working to provide as much information as we can to our citizens of Woodbury County, while remaining compliant with the laws in Iowa that dictate what information may be released and who may release it.

There are understandably many questions and concerns about what is causing this rise in the case counts. Part of the reason for the increase is that there has been a significant increase in testing occurring within Siouxland. As the testing increases, more confirmed cases are identified which require follow up, and may also call for more needed testing of contacts of the current cases. This is a cycle that will likely continue for the near future and we anticipate seeing testing numbers, and confirmed cases, continue to increase.

Iowa law (Iowa Code Chapter 22) prohibits a local public health department from releasing information that could identify a person or business identified with an illness. The law does allow for the Director of the Iowa Department of Public Health or the Iowa State Medical Director to release information that they deem necessary, and Siouxland District Health is working closely with the state of Iowa in an effort to help resolve some of the uncertainties, and also work to help mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in our area.

Siouxland District Health would like to acknowledge that a significant majority of the people in our community who have tested positive work in another state in industries that are particularly hard hit by COVID-19, or are close contacts of these workers. We are working to get the percentage of the current cases that are associated with this industry, and will have a better number when the contact tracing of all the new cases from today has been completed. Siouxland District Health Department is not able to disclose the name of the business where these individuals are employed at this time.

"We know this is a difficult time for many of us," said Siouxland District Health Director Kevin Grieme. "Many closures are affecting daily life and the concern about COVID-19 is real and understandable. It's important for residents to know when it seems there are many things they cannot control, they can control their own personal actions. It's important for everyone to stay home as much as possible and to practice social distancing – this simply

more

About Siouxland District Health Department

Siouxland District Health Department, the public health agency for Woodbury County, is creating "A healthy community for all" by "leading a collaborative effort to build a healthier community through improved access to health services, education and disease prevention." They provide public health nursing, nutrition, laboratory, health planning and environmental services. For more information on Siouxland District Health Department visit www.siouxlanddistricthealth.org.

means to stay away from groups of people, and to keep a 6-foot distance from other individuals.”

All residents should:

- Stay home as much as possible. Leave only for essential errands like groceries or getting medication. When you run these errands, send only one person from the household, if possible.
- Stay home when even mildly ill (the kind of illness that normally wouldn't prevent you from your everyday activities).
- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your elbow/upper arm.
- Wash hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

Siouxland District Health Department staff continue to follow up with each of the identified cases to monitor their situation, and provide information about self-isolation for them, their family members, and other close contacts. We may also follow up with their employer as deemed necessary. Regardless of whether they have been confirmed to have COVID-19 or not, sick Iowans must stay home and isolate themselves from others in their house until:

- You have had no fever for at least 72 hours (that is three full days of no fever without the use of medicine that reduces fevers) **AND**
- Other symptoms such as cough and shortness of breath have improved **AND**
- At least 7 days have passed since your symptoms first appeared.

This includes anyone with symptoms that has been tested for COVID-19 and are awaiting their test results. In addition, family members or other close contacts of either a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 should stay at home and self-isolate for 14 days.

For further information about novel coronavirus and statewide case counts, visit <https://idph.iowa.gov/Emerging-Health-Issues/Novel-Coronavirus>. In addition, a public hotline has been established for Iowans with questions about COVID-19. The line is available 24/7 by calling 2-1-1.

###