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City-Cowley County  
Health Department

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
September 27, 2021

### **County Wide COVID-19 Update**

The City-Cowley County Health Department monitors the health of county residents. The following is a weekly update to inform the community of the current status of the COVID-19 pandemic in Cowley County.

September has been an eventful month. Data review through today indicates that we have NOT seen a spike or large increase in the number of new cases of COVID-19 connected to outdoor events which include school athletic activities, Labor Day weekend events, and the Walnut Valley Festival. Currently personal activities connected to normal daily life have been the pathways for the continued spread of COVID-19 in the county. We continue to witness the ebb and flow of new cases centered in families with school aged children.

#### **LOCAL SCHOOLS:**

Local school districts are continuing to work to minimize the spread of all illnesses especially COVID-19. The health and safety of children in our community will remain our highest priority. In order for children to be in school they must be healthy. Everyone remains in agreement that families want children to be in school in person and benefit from classroom learning. We need everyone to work together to make sure that the school year is successful. Please remember to not send a sick child to school for any reason. If a family member becomes ill with COVID-19 every family member **MUST** quarantine if they are not vaccinated or have natural immunity from a previously documented case of COVID-19. The ill person(s) **MUST** isolate for a minimum of 10 (ten) days.

You should always contact the Health Department or your local physician for specific guidance about how to deal with the illness in your home. The most important thing to remember is to not spread the illness to others.

The same care and process must be followed if you have a child in daycare.

#### **COVID-19 TESTING:**

If you develop symptoms of illness you are encouraged to be tested. The Health Department continues to offer rapid antigen testing in our daily drive-up lane. The antigen test detects proteins from the virus that causes COVID-19 which are present in the respiratory system. Test results are generally available within 15 minutes following sample processing. Results of the tests are transmitted to people through a text message or an email. These tests are quick and a

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good tool to identify people with illness. We will also continue to offer PCR testing which is more sensitive and definitive in confirming the presence of COVID-19. If you have illness symptoms and need testing please call the office and we will provide you details for when the testing lane will be open each day.

**COWLEY COUNTY ILLNESS REPORT BY THE NUMBERS:**

Testing rates in Cowley County for COVID-19 have remained steady and we see that on average fifty (50) people test daily. New illness findings fluctuate daily, and we have seen days with as many as fifteen (15) new cases and some days with only two or three new cases. The current number active cases in Cowley County has declined over the past fourteen (14) days and is now averaging eighty (80) cases.

A comparison of the overall rates of infection in the non-vaccinated and vaccinated populations (see table below) illustrates the significant trend in illness spread.

Since March 31, 2021	Number of Cases	Percent of total
All cases	1262	100%
Vaccinated (break through)	112	8.8%
Non-Vaccinated	1050	91.2%

Month to month new case information is presented numerically in the table below:

Month/Year	New Cases
April 2021	47
May 2021	56
June 2021	28
July 2021	<b>153</b>
August 2021	<b>488</b>
September 2021* to date	<b>490</b>

COVID-19 Break through Cases	
May	2
June	2
July	25
August	50
September	33
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>112</b>

Break through Cases by Vaccine	
Moderna	63
Pfizer	32
Janssen	17
<b>Total</b>	<b>112</b>

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Since the start of the pandemic, 5161 Cowley County residents have been confirmed as positive for COVID-19. Four (4) additional deaths occurred last week. One hundred twenty-two (122) Cowley County residents have died from complications related to COVID-19 infection since March of 2020.

Cowley County, along with all counties in Kansas, remains identified as an area where infection is considered widespread. The Kansas Department of Health and Environment has updated their reporting of the ongoing pandemic for the state and individual counties including weekly county rankings. You can visit their website for more data:

<https://www.coronavirus.kdheks.gov/160/COVID-19-in-Kansas> .

### **OTHER COVID-19 NEWS:**

Last week the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved the Pfizer mRNA vaccine for an additional 3<sup>rd</sup> dose administration for people over age 65 or who are otherwise considered to be at high risk. (If you have questions about this, please call the Health Department office). That vaccine is available currently through the Health Department.

The local Public Health Office **IS NOT** issuing nor enforcing any local vaccination mandates. Locally our role remains the same. We will continue to provide sound public health advice about vaccination and report the local conditions relating to illness within the County.

As the Public Health Officer, I highly endorse the use of vaccine to stop the spread of illness. I am happy to talk to anyone about their concerns and explain the reasons I believe the vaccines are safe and effective. While I support the use of vaccines, I will always take into consideration the decisions of individuals and respect your choice. The virus does not discriminate and knows no political ideology. It will continue to evolve and seek out a host that is unprotected in order to spread. Current data indicates a strong correlation that indicates that if you are not vaccinated your risk of infection from COVID-19 is significantly higher than if you were vaccinated. I hope that you look at what is happening locally and base your decisions about your health, including vaccinations, on those facts.

### **PERSONAL CARE AND ILLNESS PREVENTION:**

Influenza vaccine is now available in the county and our efforts to provide public access to flu vaccines are moving forward. The first of two (2) drive through flu vaccination events is scheduled for Wednesday October 6, 2021 in Arkansas City, KS at the Agri-business Center in Paris Park from 10:00 AM till 6:00 PM. We will conduct a 2<sup>nd</sup> drive through event in Winfield one week later. Please see our website and Facebook for details.

Remember your individual health status is vital in combating illness of all kinds. Maintaining a healthy lifestyle includes eating nutritious foods, maintaining a healthy body weight, staying physically active, drinking plenty of water and getting adequate rest.

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For as long as the pandemic persists Cowley County residents are advised to take all necessary precautions to prevent the contraction and spread of ANY illness.

- Stay home if you feel ill.
- If you develop any symptoms of illness, be tested to determine if you are infected and to seek medical help.
- Wash your hands frequently and use hand sanitizer.
- Wear a mask in enclosed places if required to do so or if you so desire.
- Avoid crowds and large social gatherings if you believe those settings are a risk for you.
- You **MUST** stay home and isolate from others if you are ill so you will not spread the virus or any other illness to others.
- Please be kind and respectful of others.

We will issue an update next Friday afternoon October 8, 2021.

Stay well.