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Public Health Officer Upholds Requirement of 10-day isolation period for SARS-CoV2.

The Cowley County Public Health Officer has issued Local Public Health Order 2022-001 which maintains the existing required isolation period for people who test positive for COVID-19.

This is in contrast to guidance from the National Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and from the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) that has been much discussed recommending reducing the required isolation period to five (5) days with a mandatory additional five (5) full days of mask wearing for ill persons still recovering.

“Everyone is anxious to have COVID-19 be over,” stated Thomas Langer, the Cowley County Public Health officer, “the desire to have this end is resulting in some very poor decision making by individuals that are not public health professionals. Neither the CDC nor KDHE has provided empirical evidence that shows current infection rates in Cowley County are the primary result of the latest SARS-CoV2 variant known as Omicron. This version of COVID-19 reportedly is less voracious than previous iterations of the illness. Without the data to verify that people locally are infected with this so-called milder version, to risk returning people to full activity, such as work, or school would only endanger the health of others while extending the time during which the already ill person would need to sufficiently recover.”

More than 1,500 new cases of COVID-19 have been reported during the first 15 days of January 2022, which has complicated this situation further. “We need at minimum two more weeks of data to see if we can loosen the isolation and recovery period. Right now, I have record numbers of ill people in the county. If the vast majority of sick people recover fully in the next five (5) days you can rest assured that we will reevaluate this requirement. At this point in time, to make that change prematurely, is gambling with people’s health which I have taken an oath not to do”.

For local schools the advice regarding contact tracing by schools is supported by the Health Department. “I certainly support anything that can save the school nurses additional work and if that means contact tracing is suspended so be it.”

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