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City-Cowley County
Health Department

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 1, 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.

The month of October saw three hundred eighty-six (386) new cases which while still high was down from September (592) and August (488) respectively. This declining number of new cases provides hope that the peak of the Delta surge is behind us. We will be monitoring closely new cases for the next 14 days which will provide information on any increased exposures or cases may occur connected to the just past Halloween weekend and the Arkalalah Community Celebration just passed.

LOCAL SCHOOLS:

The health and safety of children in our community remains 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. Local school districts are continuing to work to minimize the spread of all illnesses especially COVID-19 by conducting screening and testing daily. 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 of any kind 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 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:

The positivity rate for the last week was 5.85% which is down from the 8.91% of the previous week. This was the second (2nd) consecutive week with a declining trend of positivity.

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	1750	100%
Vaccinated (break through)	163	9.3%
Non-Vaccinated	1513	90.7%

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

Month/Year	New Cases
April 2021	47
May 2021	56
June 2021	28
July 2021	153
August 2021	488
September 2021	592
October 2021	386

COVID-19 Break through Cases	
May	2
June	2
July	25
August	50
September	45
October	38
TOTAL	163

BT Cases by Age	
12-18	5
19-35	21
36-60	65
60+	72
Total	163

BT Cases by Vaccine	
Moderna	91
Pfizer	50
Janssen	22
Total	163

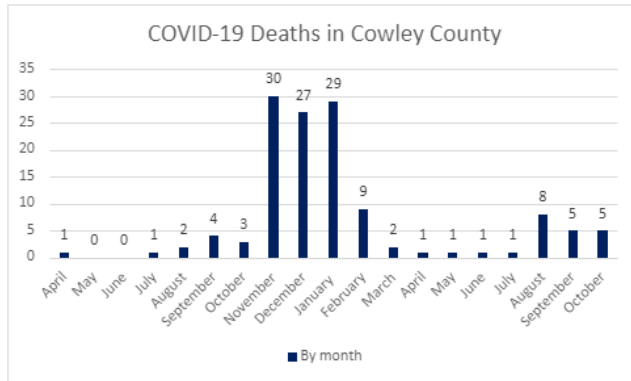
The data detailing breakthrough cases bears some explanation. In Cowley County over 14,400 people are fully vaccinated. Many of the vaccinated received Moderna (61%) in the early months when Pfizer was not widely available. When you consider that 8,800 people were vaccinated with Moderna, (5,200 were vaccinated with Pfizer and 400 people chose Janssen J&J) and then calculate failure rates $91/8800=1\%$ ($50/5200=.9\%$ and $22/400=5.5\%$) In common terminology we are seeing 99% efficiency for the mRNA vaccines through October for doses administered in Cowley County.

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Since the start of the pandemic, 5649 Cowley County residents have been confirmed as positive for COVID-19. One (1) additional death was reported in Cowley County last week. One hundred twenty-seven (127) Cowley County residents have died from complications related to COVID-19 infection since March of 2020.

Cowley County, 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> . This week when ranked Cowley County was 17th out of 105 which is very encouraging.

OTHER COVID-19 NEWS:

Booster doses are approved and we have been providing them for all vaccines – please call the Health Department if you wish to have a boost dose and we will schedule that for you. We will be offering a community boost clinic this Saturday morning November 6th for your convenience.

The Pfizer mRNA vaccine in pediatric doses for children ages 5 to 12 will be arriving very soon the vaccine is being direct shipped to the Health Department as soon as the final changes to the EUA are published. We are scheduling vaccinations for families that wish them and will notify you when the vaccine has arrived and is ready to be provided.

All vaccines will be available at both health department offices and will be offered to residents through various in house and on-site clinics over the next several weeks.

As the Public Health Officer, I highly endorse the use of vaccines to prevent and stop the spread of illness. I realize people have differing points of view on this matter. I am happy to talk to anyone about their concerns of any vaccine and explain the reasons I believe the COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective. I will respect and take into consideration the decisions of individuals. As I have stated previously the virus does not listen to news reports or follow social media. 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.

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PERSONAL CARE AND ILLNESS PREVENTION:

Influenza season is upon us. The Health Department urges everyone to roll up the sleeve and take the flu vaccine to reduce the rate of illness in the County. Prevention is a top priority for us, and it seems likely that we will not be spared influenza cases this season as our personal activity levels are back to normal for most people.

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.

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.

Remember November 2020 was a month that manifested with over 1000 new cases and 30 deaths. We are looking forward to that **NOT** happening this year, but as always, we need your help to keep the spread of illness under control.

We will issue an update Friday November 5, 2021. Until then we hope you all remains healthy and safe!

Stay well.