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City-Cowley County  
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
November 19, 2021

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

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

November viral activity remains high – especially in children and families with children, ***Thus far in November the pediatric age group (0-18) has been the most effected with over 57% of new cases occurring in that age range.*** (See charts in the COVID-19 by the numbers section). The bump in activity has affected grade school attendance in the county prompting some school closures.

#### **LOCAL SCHOOLS:**

As previously mentioned, some local schools, especially at the elementary levels are closing for a prolonged Thanksgiving break in the hopes that illness rates will decline in the student body and instructional staff. All data continues to support a projection that the current spread in the school aged population will continue for a period of at least six to eight more weeks. There have been some reports of prolonged illness in families and a few cases have been quite severe. Thankfully there are no reports locally of hospitalizations of children due to COVID-19 to this point in time.

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.

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**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 13.84% which is up dramatically from the 7.3% rate last week.

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 June 1, 2021	Number of Cases	Percent of total
All cases	2007	100%
Vaccinated (break through)	201	10%
Non-Vaccinated	1806	90%

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

Month/Year	New Cases
June 2021	28
July 2021	<b>153</b>
August 2021	<b>488</b>
September 2021	<b>592</b>
October 2021	<b>386</b>
November 2021	<b>419</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2007</b>

COVID-19 Break through Cases	
June	4
July	25
August	50
September	45
October	38
November	34
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>201</b>

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BT Cases by Age	
12-18	8
19-35	29
36-60	72
60+	92
<b>Total</b>	<b>201</b>

BT Cases by Vaccine	
Moderna	119
Pfizer	57
Janssen	25
<b>Total</b>	<b>201</b>

COVID-19 Cases in Cowley County Children by year: \*= to date of report

2020	Age 5-11	Age 0-18		2021	Age 5-11	Age 0-18
July	1	4		July	4	19
August	1	3		August	37	119
September	2	11		September	53	157
October	3	8		October	50	120
November	8	50		November*	102	242
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>76</b>		<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>246</b>	<b>657</b>

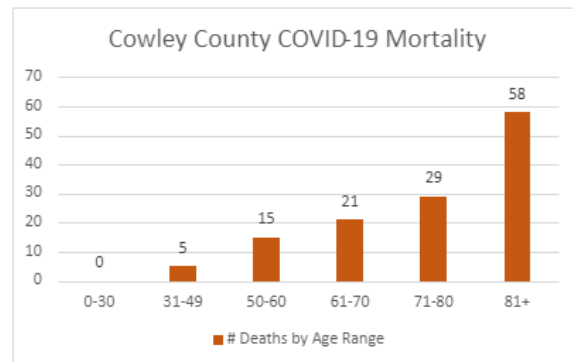
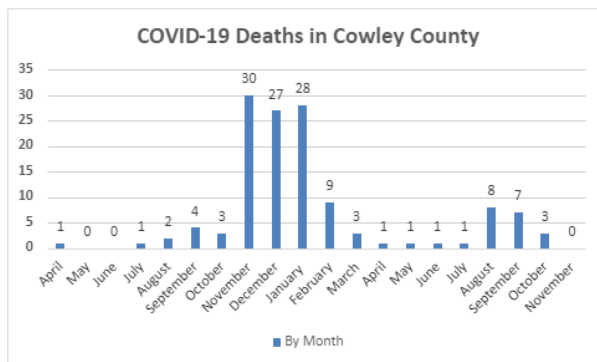
Comparison of Cowley County COVID-19 Delta:

Total Cases vs Pediatric Cases:

\*= to date of report

			Age 5-11	Age 0-18	% of total
July	2021	<b>153</b>	4	19	12.4
August	2021	<b>488</b>	37	119	24.4
September	2021	<b>592</b>	53	157	26.5
October	2021	<b>386</b>	50	120	31.0
November	2021	<b>419</b>	102	242	<b>57.75</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>2007</b>	<b>246</b>	<b>657</b>	<b>32.7</b>

Since the start of the pandemic, 6086 Cowley County residents have been confirmed as positive for COVID-19. One additional death has been reported thus far in November. One hundred twenty-eight (128) Cowley County residents have died from complications related to COVID-19 infection since March of 2020.



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Cowley County remains identified as an area where infection remains 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:**

**Booster doses:** The FDA has approved booster vaccinations for all people over age 18 that were previously vaccinated. If you are interested in a boost dose of COVID-19 vaccine please contact the Health Department and we will provide that for you.

The Pfizer mRNA vaccine in pediatric doses for children ages 5 to 12 is available and parents wishing to have their children vaccinated are encouraged to call to arrange appointments for children. All vaccines are available at both health department offices.

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.

Remember the emphasis of my position is to PREVENT illness and disease. The views that I hold are based in the data and other medical evidence available to me such as the overall rate of vaccination acceptance, COVID-19 illness rates compared over time, the overall infection and recovery rates in the Cowley County population, and current trends in illness which I monitor very closely.

Evidence is proving that the virus does not listen to news reports or follow social media, it does not discriminate and knows no political ideology. It is actively seeking hosts that are unprotected in order to spread. There is a proven correlation showing that vaccination will reduce your risk of infection from COVID-19.

### **ONE YEAR AGO:**

Not all the news this week is bad. One year ago, during the first 20 days of November 2020, 655 new COVID-19 cases were identified, and 18 Cowley County residents died from COVID-19 related illness.

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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. Next week is Thanksgiving. Please take care when visiting family and friends. If you are ill, please do not participate in any group events. Help you family and friends remain healthy.

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.

The next health update will be published Friday, December 3, 2021.

Until then Happy Thanksgiving!

Stay well.