

# PUBLIC HEALTH UPDATE



## Health Department Program Highlight: Public Health Emergency Preparedness

Disaster can strike at any time and without warning. Your Health Department is permanently engaged in preparing for times of emergency. In a time of a public health or medical disaster, the Health Department will play a critical role in coordinating the available Public Health and Medical resources to ensure a rapid response and recovery.

## Health Department Regional Leadership

The Health Department takes a leading role on the regional level by collaborating with the health departments of neighboring counties. On Friday, March 18th, the Health Department partnered with Cowley County Emergency Management and participated in an exercise to test our response plans. During the exercise, the Health Department identified areas of improvement and will continue to refine the plans in place to maximize our readiness.

## Local Preparedness Exercise

The Health Department and Emergency Management want to share the lessons we have learned and will collaborate to host a local tabletop exercise with local partners including long-term care facilities, hospitals, and at-risk populations. The goal will be to further test our emergency response plans and identify any areas that may need improvement.

Your Health Department continually adapts to the rapid pace of modern life so that, should disaster strike, we will be ready. Regardless of the challenge, we will always respond and never run away.

## Feeling Sick?

If you do become ill, please do not participate in any group events until after you have fully recovered from your illness. 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 symptoms of illness, get tested to determine if you are infected.
- Wash your hands frequently and use hand sanitizer.
- Clean high touch surfaces with disinfecting cleaners (doors, counters etc.).
- Wear a mask that properly covers your nose and mouth while in public.
- When ill stay home and isolate from others so you will not spread illness.

## What's New in Public Health?



### Health Department Award

On Saturday March 19th, your local Health Department received the Open Arms Award from the Arkansas City Area Chamber of Commerce. This award, given to area non-profits and organizations that go above and beyond for the community, was presented at the Arkansas City Area Chamber of Commerce Annual Banquet. Paisley Howerton, director for the Chamber of Commerce, noted, "We are grateful for all of the efforts they've made to keep us healthy and safe – especially over the past couple of years."

### Health & Safety Fair

The Cowley County Health and Safety Fair returns once again! The event will be held in **Arkansas City at the AgriBusiness Building on Saturday, June 4th from 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM.** If you would like to take part in the Health and Safety Fair this year, email [dvildasol@cowleycountyks.gov](mailto:dvildasol@cowleycountyks.gov) for more information!

### New Health Department Smart Phone App

In today's fast-paced, digitally-connected world, we are always seeking ways to better communicate with and serve the residents of Cowley County. To increase our accessibility, we are excited to announce that a new Health Department smartphone app is in development. Using the app, residents of Cowley County will be able to stay up to date with the latest Health Department news or important public health information. The app will also link automatically to our Facebook page and Twitter account to streamline our communication. We will post more information soon and expect the app to be available to download early this summer.

## COVID & Illness Data

COVID-19 remains active in Cowley County, though at a reduced pace. With an average of 2.3 new cases per day, 55 new cases have been documented this month as of March 24th. Should you become ill, please contact the Health Department to schedule testing. Wait until you have fully recovered from your illness before participating in any group events. All residents are reminded to take common-sense precautions to avoid the contraction and spread of any illness.

Month to month new case information

New Cases	2021	*=month to date 2022
Month	2021	2022
January	828	2675
February	304	321
March	90	*55
April	47	
May	59	
June	28	
July	153	
August	488	
September	592	
October	386	
November	606	
December	653	
TOTAL	4159	3051

Comparison of previous year, 2021, with current year to date

Year Total	2021	2022
Total Cases	4159	3051
% of cases	100%	73%