

PUBLIC HEALTH UPDATE

WHAT'S NEW IN PUBLIC HEALTH?

National Influenza Vaccination Week

Next week (December 5-9) is National Influenza Vaccination Week, and with confirmed influenza A cases reported in the county, we highly recommend everyone get their flu shot as soon as possible!

Flu shots are designed yearly to protect against the highest risk or most circulating strains of flu. While infection is possible from other strains, the flu shot will still provide plenty of benefits even if you are infected. Flu shots are proven to lessen the severity of symptoms and shorten the length of illness.

However, it can take up to 2 weeks after your flu shot to develop full protection. So, don't delay! Contact the Health Department and get your appointment scheduled today!

COPE Community Health Worker

The Health Department is excited to announce that we are hosting Carmelyna Andres, a community health worker affiliated with one of our community partners, the Communities Organizing to Promote Equity, or COPE Project. Carmelyna is bilingual and has lived in the community for years. With her knowledge and understanding of assistance programs, she will help connect clients with resources by guiding them through the processes. If you need her services or know someone who does, visit a Health Department location or contact Carmelyna directly:

Phone: (913) 329-2119 | **Email:** candres@kumc.edu



National Handwashing Week

Next week (December 5-9) is National Handwashing Week, and with respiratory illnesses rising in the community, we want to highlight the importance of handwashing.

Regular handwashing remains one of the best ways to prevent illness. When we interact with the world around us, our hands will take on thousands of germs, some of which can cause illness. Thorough and regular handwashing stops the cycle of infection by preventing these microorganisms from entering the body and causing illness.

Follow the 5 steps of handwashing to make sure your hands stay clean:

1. Wet your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap, and apply soap.
2. Lather your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.
3. Scrub your hands for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? Hum the "Happy Birthday" song from beginning to end twice.
4. Rinse your hands well under clean, running water.
5. Dry your hands using a clean towel or air dry them.



COMMUNITIES ORGANIZING TO PROMOTE EQUITY

COVID & ILLNESS DATA

November has ended with 164 COVID cases reported in the county, a marked step up from October. However, COVID is not the only respiratory illness currently circulating in the

Month to month new case information

New Cases	2021	2022
Month	2021	2022
January	828	2675
February	304	321
March	90	61
April	47	44
May	59	112
June	28	174
July	153	528
August	488	526
September	592	264
October	386	114
November	606	164
December	653	
TOTAL	4159	4983

community. Influenza A and RSV cases continue to rise alongside COVID cases. This increase has resulted in co-infections as several individuals have become very ill from a combination of these 3 illnesses. We strongly urge everyone to use the best practices in order to prevent illness. Handwashing, flu shots, and staying home while ill are some the best ways you can help protect yourself and others from illness as winter approaches and temperatures continue to drop.

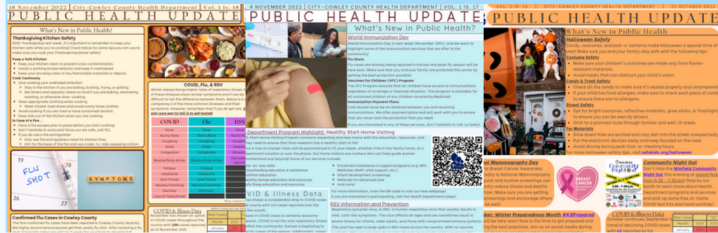
Comparison of previous year, 2021, with current year to date

Year Total	2021	2022
Total Cases	4159	4983
% of cases	100%	120%

Current case count as of November 30th

Health Department E-Mailing List

Want to make sure you never miss the latest news from the Health Department? Then sign up for our new e-mailing list! We'll automatically send you the latest news including event announcements, press releases, and every Public Health Update! Just scan the QR code below or visit survey.alchemer.com/s3/7132779/Health-Department-Mailing-List



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, be 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.