



Lawrence · Douglas County
PUBLIC HEALTH
Advancing Health for All



NEWS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Douglas County Health Officer prohibits public gatherings of 50-plus people

Also strongly recommends other social distancing practices

LAWRENCE – Douglas County Health Officer Dr. Thomas Marcellino on March 17 prohibited public gatherings in the county of more than 50 people for eight weeks to help stem the COVID-19 disease outbreak. The new restriction is in line with an executive order issued March 16 by Kansas Gov. Laura Kelly.

Marcellino said in addition to the order, Lawrence-Douglas County Public Health also strongly recommends no public gatherings greater than 10 people for the next eight weeks, through May 12, as a proactive social distancing measure.

“We would strongly recommend people limit their gatherings to less than 10 people as we try to flatten the curve of the spread of this disease,” he said. “People need to avoid non-essential community engagement and non-essential trips out of their homes.”

As of 10 a.m. March 17, Kansas had 11 positive cases of COVID-19, including eight in Johnson County, one in Franklin County and the state’s only death due to the coronavirus disease in Wyandotte County. Douglas County did not currently have a positive case, but Marcellino said with national health officials expecting more cases across the country in coming weeks, Public Health and community partners were encouraging people to be proactive.

The Health Officer has strongly recommended:

- People avoid non-essential trips and stay home to the extent they can.
- Restaurants close in-house dining and limit service to carry out or delivery.
- Daycare centers to close while schools are closed.
- Retirement communities and long-term care centers limit visitors.
- People avoid large gatherings including sports practices, games and tournaments and unnecessary social gatherings.
- If you do need to go out in public, work to ensure you maintain six feet from other people.

Public Health has worked closely on these decisions with numerous community partners, including Douglas County Government, City of Lawrence, Douglas County Emergency Management and leadership of local public and private school districts.

Douglas County residents can also stay informed as information changes frequently. For general information visit www.cdc.gov/COVID19 or LDCHealth.org/Coronavirus. Call the KDHE phone bank at 1-866-534-3463 (1-866-KDHEINF) Monday – Friday, 8 a.m.–5 p.m., email COVID-19@ks.gov or Lawrence-Douglas County Public Health’s information line at 785-856-4343 or email info@ldchealth.org.

About Lawrence-Douglas County Public Health

Nationally accredited Lawrence-Douglas County Public Health has served the Lawrence and Douglas County community for more than 130 years. Its mission is to advance policies, practices and programs that promote health for all, prevent disease and protect the environment.

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