



Lawrence · Douglas County  
**PUBLIC HEALTH**  
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**NEWS RELEASE**  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **First two COVID-19 deaths identified in Douglas County**

**LAWRENCE** – Lawrence-Douglas County Public Health is reporting two deaths of Douglas County residents due to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) or with the virus as a contributing factor. These are the first COVID-19-related deaths of Douglas County residents during the pandemic.

The first was a male resident in his 70s who died earlier this month, and the second death was a male resident in his 80s who died this week. Both patients had been hospitalized. The first resident's death was initially not deemed to be related to COVID-19 after consultation with infectious disease doctors and a Kansas Department of Health and Environment epidemiologist, but a further review by KDHE finalized on Wednesday has classified it as a COVID-19 death.

The KDHE definition of a COVID-19 death includes a person with a death certificate that lists COVID-19 as a cause of death or a significant condition contributing to death. The county through 1 p.m. July 22 has 542 positive cases of COVID-19, including the two deaths.

"This is a tragic loss of life, and we share our heartfelt condolences with the families," Director Dan Partridge said. "While the majority of cases of COVID-19 are believed to be mild, the virus can cause a very serious infection that can lead to death. This is why it is important for everyone to take precautions right now, including wearing masks, to help limit the spread of the coronavirus."

Lawrence-Douglas County Public Health has worked diligently in recent months on the county's COVID-19 pandemic response efforts with community partners including the City of Lawrence, Douglas County Government, LMH Health and Douglas County Emergency Management.

Douglas County's Local Health Officer Dr. Thomas Marcellino has implemented various public health orders since March. Currently:

- The county remains in an extended Phase 3 of Smart & Safe Reopening Douglas County, which includes limits on public gatherings of more than 45 people and implements social-distancing requirements for businesses.
- A local health order has closed bars and nightclubs in Douglas County until further notice.
- On July 1, Marcellino issued an order requiring most people wear masks in all indoor public spaces and in situations where six feet of separation is not possible.

“Unfortunately, this is a reminder of the importance of taking precautions, especially practicing social distancing and wearing a mask when you leave your home and encounter others in public,” Marcellino said. “We continue to ask everyone to be diligent in protecting themselves and our neighbors.”

Lawrence-Douglas County Public Health maintains the Coronavirus hotline, 785-856-4343, and there are [options in the community for COVID-19 screening and testing](#). Always call a healthcare provider to let them know of your symptoms before showing up.

Members of the public can also check [douglascountyks.org/coronavirus](http://douglascountyks.org/coronavirus) or [ldchealth.org/coronavirus](http://ldchealth.org/coronavirus) for information about COVID-19 in Douglas County.

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