



Lawrence · Douglas County
PUBLIC HEALTH
Advancing Health for All



NEWS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Aug. 26, 2020

Contact: George Diepenbrock
Communications Officer
Office: (785) 856-7360

Compliance with isolation and quarantine orders key to slowing spread of COVID-19 cases in Douglas County

LAWRENCE – As Douglas County has seen an increase in COVID-19 cases in recent days as part of the University of Kansas entry testing, Lawrence-Douglas County Public Health disease investigators have been working to identify close contacts of positive cases to quarantine them with the goal of slowing the spread of the coronavirus in the community.

As part of this process of identifying close contacts, especially in settings where college students live and interact in close quarters and proximity, we have issued quarantine orders for current residents of nine KU Greek community chapter houses and are in the process of a tenth. This is an evolving situation.

This includes the following chapter houses: Pi Kappa Phi, Phi Gamma Delta, Kappa Kappa Gamma, Phi Kappa Psi, Gamma Phi Beta, Delta Delta Delta, Alpha Chi Omega, Sigma Nu, Kappa Alpha Theta and Beta Theta Pi.

“This is one of the most effective measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Even if you are asymptomatic, it is important to comply with this directive, especially to protect those in our community who are at high risk,” said Douglas County’s Local [Health Officer Dr. Thomas Marcellino](#). “In cases where contacts are identified in Greek chapter houses, we consider them as living in a household. And household members are considered high risk.”

The quarantine orders would apply to individuals currently living at the houses deemed to be close contacts at risk of exposure but does not extend to chapter members who live elsewhere.

Close contacts are individuals who spent more than 10 minutes within six feet of the person who tested positive back to 48 hours before the patient’s onset of symptoms.

Individuals assigned to quarantine and monitor for symptoms for 14 days would be able to serve their quarantine at their permanent residence, if desired, but any requirement to do this would be an individual’s decision or chapter’s decision and not a public health requirement.

“Based on the 14-day incubation period of the virus, it is most productive to serve the quarantine instead of chasing a negative test through Watkins Health Services,” Director Dan Partridge said. “If you are feeling symptomatic during quarantine, contact your healthcare provider to be screened for a test.”

More detailed information about the contact tracing process is [available at LDCHealth.org](#).

According to KU, as of Tuesday afternoon 222 people have tested positive out of 19,452 entry test results received, for a positivity rate of 1.14%. The overall positivity rate among members of the Greek community was 5.47%.

University of Kansas and LDCPH leaders also met with members of the KU Greek community Wednesday evening to share information about the process and guidance for moving forward.

“We commend the members of this community who are taking positive steps to this end, and encourage that work to continue,” KU Chancellor Doug Girod said in his [campus message Tuesday](#). “No single group will ultimately be responsible for our overall success or failure in combating this disease. That responsibility rests with all of us.”

Other important ways to reduce transmission of COVID-19 are:

- Wear a mask when in public and not able to practice social distancing from others.
- Practice social distancing, staying at least 6 feet apart from others when in public or outdoors;
- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer when soap and water is not immediately available;
- Cover coughs and sneezes with your elbow and avoid touching your face;

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](#) or [ldchealth.org/coronavirus](#) for information about COVID-19 in Douglas County.

-30-

Together, day by day, building a healthy community

www.ldchealth.org

