



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**With recent increase in COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations Douglas County leadership asks residents to redouble efforts on mask wearing, social distancing and limiting gatherings**

**LAWRENCE** – As Douglas County has seen an increasing number of COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations in the past two weeks, Unified Command leaders ask residents to be vigilant about public health practices to help control the spread of the coronavirus, including mask wearing and practicing social distancing.

The county added 122 cases to its total since Friday afternoon, and the 14-day moving average of new cases per day has increased to 33.79 new cases per day after it was down below 18 in late October. The county's 14-day moving average for positivity rate also increased Monday to 11.4%. LMH Health on Monday had 19 inpatients positive for COVID-19, its highest number during the pandemic.

Lawrence-Douglas County Public Health disease investigators have identified recent trends for exposure among positive cases that include travel to area communities with high levels of cases and social gatherings with lapses in mask wearing and social distancing among those who attended. Anyone awaiting a COVID-19 test result should quarantine until they get the results to avoid from potentially infecting others in the event of a positive result.

“Our community has done well throughout the pandemic in following public health practices, including mask wearing and spreading out to reduce chances for transmission, but these numbers are a reminder for how quickly things can turn around with the virus if any of us let our guards down,” said Dr. Thomas Marcellino, Douglas County's Local Health Officer. “The best thing we can all do to help slow the spread is to ensure we are getting back to the basics of mask wearing, spreading out and being safe.”

Marcellino said with a higher number of inpatients now at LMH Health, the percentage of beds and ventilators in use still remain at levels the community can handle based on surge planning conducted earlier this year.

“It's important that we keep these levels manageable,” he said. “The pandemic has had an ebb and flow to it, and everyone in our community has a part to play in helping us get the momentum back.”

Marcellino stressed:

- Masking up
- Spreading out and maintaining six feet of distance in public
- Washing your hands frequently
- Self-isolating and calling your provider if you feel sick
- Keeping your circle of close contacts small to be safe

With Thanksgiving and the holiday season approaching, Douglas County residents should take time now to assess risk factors surrounding holiday gatherings and travel. Guidance is available at [LDHealth.org/COVIDtravel](https://LDHealth.org/COVIDtravel). Anyone experiencing COVID-19 symptoms can call the LDCPH Coronavirus hotline, 785-856-4343, to be screened for a test.