



Contact Tracing Centralization

Effective January 13, 2022

Wayne County Health Department has tried to keep the community informed throughout the pandemic. There are times when the community might like more information or to see specific data but with a small number of staff and continuation of other programs, we have had to maintain a balance. It is our role to help provide resources, reliable information, focus efforts on the prevention of illness, and prepare for emergencies. We are very proud of our staff's efforts and the community partnerships we have gained during the pandemic. We will continue to serve this community in prevention efforts but at this time it has now become your individual responsibility to ensure public safety.

Case numbers and active cases are as high as they have ever been. Wayne County remains at 35.92% fully vaccinated. Illinois Local Health Departments do not have enough staff to address all calls that will be coming in from the community. Right now, county health departments, healthcare providers, and hospitals are overwhelmed. IDPH determined that centralizing contact tracing may help address the high volume of cases for all health departments.

As of December 28th, all COVID-19 cases now receive an automated message informing them of quarantine/isolation information (**IDPH COVID: There is important info for you. Call 312-777-1999 or click: <https://dph.illinois.gov/covid19/community-guidance/confirmed-or-possible-covid-19.html>**.) It is important to remember to provide your current activated phone number to the testing facility to ensure you receive your automated message.

As of January 13th, all cases will be sent to the Illinois Department of Public Health Surge Center to help automate the information provided so individuals have quick access to the information. Other states have used this process previously to help reduce call volumes for the local health departments. The Surge Center will be prioritizing cases and calls. If you don't get a call, that doesn't mean you don't need to isolate or quarantine. If there is no call, please follow current isolation/quarantine recommendations to protect yourself and others.

The Surge Center employees are not our employees. Therefore, moving forward if you need letters for release from work you will need to request them from the Surge Center. If you don't participate in the assessments offered, the Surge Center will not generate release letters. WCHD cannot issue release letters as letters will be part of the centralized contact tracing efforts.

It is important for our healthcare workers that you choose to stay at home. Those utilizing home tests should also be aware of precautions to take and should be taking them. You have the tools to prevent severe illness which include vaccination, boosters, masking, social distancing, handwashing, and disinfection. If you are positive, please reach out to your provider for possible antibody therapy, vitamin regimens, or antiviral medication.

There is some personal responsibility that comes with being a member of a healthy community. At this time, you should be sharing your information regarding your symptoms, positive tests, or exposure with your worksite, family, friends, and others that you care about following gatherings or before gatherings. Although we have helped guide the community through recommendations and best practices, individuals now should generally know what to do and when to do it. We will continue to provide links on Facebook with information that will help guide actions that are needed. We will be sharing the most updated recommendation on upcoming posts. This information will continue to change so please ensure you are following the most up-to-date recommendations. The vaccine is readily available to help reduce severe illness and death. We will continue to provide COVID immunizations.

We encourage employers to revise Human Resource requirements of work excuse and work return letters. Due to high level of cases and the Surge Center prioritization, such documentation may be difficult to obtain as quickly as when cases were managed at a local level.

We wanted to share these changes as we will have a more limited role in contact tracing going forward. We will continue to address calls and concerns. Please understand that our staff will continue to do all that we can to represent Wayne County and to address your calls and concerns as we hear from you. We DEEPLY care for this community as you ALL are our family and friends.

Isolation and Quarantine Guidance

<https://dph.illinois.gov/covid19/community-guidance/quarantine-guidance.html>

Vaccine Administration Data

<https://dph.illinois.gov/covid19/vaccine/vaccine-data.html?county=Illinois>

Region 5 County Metrics

<https://dph.illinois.gov/covid19/data/region-metrics.html?regionID=5>

CDC COVID Data Tracker

https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#county-view?list_select_state=Illinois&data-type=Risk