



Linn County Public Health
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LinnCounty.org



Pramod Dwivedi, MS, DrPH (c), Health Director

Dear Linn County Residents:

As Linn County Board of Health members, it is our duty to assure transparency and steady guidance of our public health system during this unprecedented crisis brought about by the coronavirus.

On March 21, 2020, Linn County Public Health (LCPH) announced the first COVID-19 case in our community. In the past two weeks, we have confirmed scores of additional cases and even some deaths. Many of these deaths are associated with an outbreak in a long-term care facility. Sadly, the number of cases and deaths will likely rise in Linn County throughout the course of this crisis. The totality of this pandemic is certain to strain the ability of hospitals throughout our county, the state and nation.

We are working with our local, state, and federal partners to protect the health of our residents and to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 here in Linn County. In order to save as many lives as possible, we must slow the spread of the virus through enhanced social distancing. This means staying at home except for essential trips to destinations such as the grocery store and pharmacy, and limiting those trips when possible. Think about it this way: every time you go out in public, you are risking your life. This should cause all of us to be incredibly discerning about which trips and errands are essential.

We must all deal with the loss of our sense of normalcy during this time. However, the scope and extent of our loss depends on our shared commitment to adopting and implementing all preventive measures that have been recommended by the experts. Doing so will limit the spread of the virus, reduce the number of people who get sick, and ultimately save lives. To this end, our Board endorses the recommendations of the Iowa Board of Medicine and the Iowa Medical Society in their call for a statewide shelter-in-place order. Since there is no vaccine for COVID-19 at the present time, a shelter-in-place order appears to be the strongest mechanism to significantly reduce public interactions, which in turn should slow the transmission rate. We understand that one measure alone will not end this virus, but we do know that when taken together, these measures will give our community and our country the best chance at surviving this pandemic with minimal loss of life, which is our chief concern.

It is also vital to follow other recommendations and mandatory measures to ease the burden on our healthcare infrastructure. If too many people rush to our emergency rooms for non-emergency care, our system will be overwhelmed with the demand. We urge everyone concerned that they may have symptoms to stay home and contact their primary care physician initially for advice regarding how to proceed with evaluation and testing if needed.

Our federal and state partners have developed comprehensive mitigation guidelines for the general public and for the private sector. These guidelines can be viewed by visiting the Linn County Public Health website at linncounty.org/health. You can also visit Iowa Department Public Health's website at idph.iowa.gov, and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's website at www.cdc.gov.

We urge all Iowans to follow these preventive measures and stay home as much as you can to protect yourselves, your family, and our community. Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,

Mary Tarbox, RN, Ed.D, Chair

Leslie Wright, Vice Chair

James Levett, MD

Karl Cassell

Stacey Walker

Mission: To prevent disease and injuries, promote healthy living, protect the environment and ensure public health preparedness.
Vision: Build a Healthier Linn County

EMAIL: health@linncounty.org | WEB: linncounty.org/health

