



Elkhart County healthcare leaders issue urgent plea regarding recent COVID-19 surge

Public service announcements urge the community to take action

ELKHART, Indiana (October 16, 2020) – As current COVID-19 cases continue to spike in Elkhart County, area healthcare leaders are imploring community members to take precautionary action to bring numbers down.

“Our communities have experienced this before,” stated Dr. Lydia Mertz, Elkhart County Health Officer, in response to the urgent need to lower COVID-19 cases. “Not long ago we were considered a COVID-19 ‘hot spot’, and through the hard work and commitment of frontline healthcare workers, local task forces and area residents we significantly improved our county health metrics. Together, we can do this again and turn our current numbers around.”

Prior to the county’s recent surge in COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations due to virus had been dramatically reduced over the past four months according to data shared by Elkhart County Health Department Board of Directors in September. Key metrics showed that ongoing cooperation and precautionary action to protect the public was working.

On behalf of Elkhart County healthcare workers, Dr. Daniel Nafziger, Chief Medical Officer at Goshen Health, Randy Christophel, President and CEO at Goshen Health and Elkhart County Health Officer, Dr. Lydia Mertz, released a public service announcement reminding residents to remain vigilant in the fight against COVID-19 and continue to practice proper safety precautions.

[The public service announcement can be viewed and downloaded by clicking this link.](#) Members of the media are encouraged to share with their readership and viewership.

ABOUT THE ELKHART COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

The Elkhart County Health Department began in 1949. The first staff included a part-time Health Commissioner, Public Health Nurses who visited in schools and homes, Sanitarians who inspected restaurants and dairy farms, plus Vital Record Clerks who kept birth and death records. Today the department consists of over 100 people, including 70 full-time employees, working in five divisions. The Health Department offers services to all county residents with a vision of “Healthy Lives, Healthy Communities.”

The Department is led by a Health Officer who is entrusted with the responsibility of addressing the public health concerns of Elkhart County. This is accomplished through the various divisions and programs of the Health Department. Our mission, and the mission of all health departments throughout the United States, is to promote a healthy life and lifestyle by increasing the quality and years of healthy life and eliminating health disparities. We carry out our mission in association with the Indiana State Department of Health, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and other governmental and public health agencies.

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