

To our Kearny County Community:

Our numbers of both new positive cases and clinic visits trended back up slightly this past week, but overall we continue to remain relatively stable as a community. Our most exciting news is that we received enough vials of COVID-19 to vaccinate approximately 100 community members who meet phase 2 criteria (persons aged 65+ or high-contact critical workers), this was started last week and should continue this week. We hope to receive 100 doses from the state every 1-2 weeks in order to continue to work through phase 2 in our county. As a reminder, we have developed a COVID-19 vaccine "waiting list" right now through the health department. We ask that those over age 65 or with any chronic medical conditions to please contact the health department at 355-4003 if you are interested in receiving the vaccine. You should leave a message at that number, and you will be placed on the contact list. We will use this list to contact individuals when we have available vaccine.

As quarantine continues to be a frustration for many in our community, a reminder of 2 ways to avoid unnecessary quarantine:

1. Wear a mask: Most non-household close contact exposures who are wearing a mask appropriately during the time of exposure will not have to quarantine.
2. Get the vaccine: 7-14 days after the second dose of COVID-19 vaccine is administered, an individual is considered fully vaccinated. These individuals will not be subject to quarantine for household or non-household exposures.

Thank you to the community for your continued support of our hospital and county health department, and the ways that you have all helped us to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in the county over the last few months. We are making progress! However, limited regional ICU capacity continues to be a major issue in providing care to COVID and non-COVID patients alike. We as a community need to "stay the course." Ongoing evidence continues to show that wearing a mask is an effective way to reduce transmission of COVID-19. A recent study showed that just a 10% increase in mask-wearing by those within a community tripled the odds that the community could maintain control of virus transmission within that community. Mask-wearing remains important until we see an improvement in regional healthcare capacity and until we are able to vaccinate a significant portion of our county. Thank you for continuing to show preference to your family, friends, and neighbors.



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