

To our Kearny County Community:

We remain at County Alert Level 2 again as of this week. Our numbers in the county and across the region continue to improve. This is likely due to a combination of immunity from previous infection and immunity from our increasing number of vaccinated individuals within the county. However, an individual's immune response to the vaccine continues to prove to be more robust and predictable. A couple of updates with regards to vaccines:

1. The CDC came out this week with updated guidance for individuals who have been fully vaccinated against COVID-19. These recommendations state that people who've been fully vaccinated (it's been at least 2 weeks since they received their final dose) can get together with others who've been fully vaccinated indoors **without wearing a mask** or **staying at least 6 feet apart**. They can also socialize indoors with unvaccinated people from one other household **without anyone wearing a mask** or **social distancing** if no one from the other house is at risk for severe COVID-19 illness. Finally, they **do not have to quarantine** or undergo SARS-CoV-2 testing following exposure to someone with COVID-19.
2. The CDC concluded this updated guidance with the statements that fully vaccinated people should continue to wear a mask and follow physical distancing practices in public or around high-risk individuals.

What does this mean? This guidance may seem small, but it is the first time the CDC has offered practical guidance on how vaccinated individuals can move safely away from the 3 W's (two of them anyway, we should continue to wash our hands!). This guidance helps vaccinated individuals know when they can safely not wear a mask nor worry about social distancing, and also re-emphasizes that vaccinated individuals will not have to miss work or other activities due to quarantine. We need more individuals to sign up for the vaccine. The waiting list is open to any Kearny County resident. If you are 18 years or older, please call the Health Department at 620-355-4003 to get on the waiting list for the COVID-19 vaccine. Let's continue to work together to eliminate COVID-19 from Kearny County.

Stay healthy,

Drew Miller, MD, FAAFP
Kearny County Health Officer