



# KEARNY COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT

PREVENT PROMOTE PROTECT



August 31, 2021

We wanted to update you on our hospital status over the weekend. As of Sunday, had 4 COVID-19 inpatients, with ages ranging 25-55 and a total of one remaining hospital bed. The most severe COVID-19 case declined to the point of needing transfer, and our team spent approximately 6 hours contacting 10 different states to find an ICU bed for that patient. We found that most hospitals at this time are not accepting COVID patients from out of state, which means that when the in-state hospital options that have a higher level of care are full, we are left to care for patients here at KCH with higher acuity than we are equipped to take care of well. Our local and regional healthcare systems are straining at the seams, which is also affecting the care that is available for all elective (example: bowel resection for colon cancer) and non-elective (example: heart attack/stroke) cases, as well as affecting the general inpatient bed availability throughout the state. Our entire clinic, hospital, and long-term care staff have given extraordinary efforts in caring for patients, but are extremely tired. We are exhausted. I share this not to provoke fear, but to provide insight into the reasons that we, as healthcare providers, are so strongly encouraging intervention at this time.

What can you do? As we have previously mentioned, there are 2 measures that have significant effect on cutting down the spread of COVID-19. Please get your COVID-19 vaccine if you have not done so already. The data is clear: the vaccines are safe and effective. The vast majority (97% or more) of COVID-19 hospitalizations throughout the state are unvaccinated individuals. The simple act of getting vaccinated helps to take the strain off the healthcare system and will significantly cut down on the spread of the virus. Wear a mask in the appropriate settings to reduce transmission of the virus.

In Kearny County, 50.3% of those eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine have been fully vaccinated. We are a small community that takes pride in how we take care of and look out for each other. Our intent is not to violate anyone's rights, this is about loving your neighbor and caring for someone more vulnerable than yourself. By getting vaccinated and taking measures to mitigate spread of the virus, we are doing exactly this - loving our neighbor and considering the needs of others more than our own.

We continue to be at a County Alert Level 4. Please do what you can to help us keep our community safe and healthy. Thanks for all that you are doing to help in our continuing effort to care well for our family, friends, and neighbors.

Sincerely,

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