



Memorandum

TO: Kevin Jackson, Village Manager *K Jackson UB*

FROM: Dr. Theresa Chapple McGruder, Public Health Director *JCM*

FOR: Village President and Board of Trustees

DATE: May 13, 2022

SUBJECT: Community COVID Update

COVID in the Community:

The Oak Park Public Health Department has been committed to addressing COVID-19 in the Village of Oak Park since March 2020. Below is a summary of our overall mitigation strategy as well our recent efforts over the last few weeks which include revolve around a three-step approach, primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention.

1. Primary prevention is defined as intervening before health effects occur through measures such as vaccinations, altering risky behaviors (poor eating habits, tobacco use), and banning substances known to be associated with a disease or health condition (CDC).
 - o Our primary prevention approach revolves around limiting the number of people who contract COVID-19. The Health Department as done the following:
 - Educate the community about the ways COVID-19 spreads and provide information on COVID-19 rates and events/activities that were associated with recent outbreaks, in an effort to aid residents' decision-making about activities and potential risk.
 - Work with local businesses to develop COVID-19 protocols for their employees.
 - Work with daycares, schools, congregate living facilities, and long-term care facilities to create COVID-19 mitigation plans and we review and update these plans whenever there is an outbreak.
 - Provided over 8000 KN95 and N95 to businesses, high-risk community settings, and community members; 2000 masks were hand delivered by the health department team to residents homes this winter as we were experiencing delays in our mail service.
 - In medium levels of COVID-19, continue to stress the importance of wearing a mask when interacting with vulnerable populations, testing prior to events, staying home when sick to avoid inadvertently spreading

COVID-19, isolate if positive, quarantine if exposed and not up-to-date on vaccinations, high-quality mask wearing if up-to-date on vaccinations and exposed to COVID-19, and staying up-to-date on vaccinations and boosters.

2. Secondary prevention is defined as- screening to identify diseases in the earliest stages, before the onset of signs and symptoms, through measures such as mammography and regular blood pressure testing (CDC)
 - o Our secondary prevention approach revolves around providing asymptomatic and symptomatic COVID-19 test to the public. The Health Department has/is
 - Offered systematic asymptomatic testing as a service to employers, specifically employers of high-risk facilities.
 - Offered and conducted outbreak testing at high-risk facilities, one such event will happen this Sunday at a long-term care facility that is in outbreak status.
 - Offered screening testing to the public to coincide with events that normally lead to large spread, such as Christmas and return from spring break.
 - Ramping up its PCR testing program and conducting PCR and Rapid Antigen Testing at community events, one such event will happen this Sunday at FFC on Lake St.
 - Created guidance for the community on what to do if they test positive for COVID-19.
 - Provided community members with steps to mitigate COVID-19 spread within their household, including providing free rapid test kits.

3. Tertiary prevention is defined as- managing disease post diagnosis to slow or stop disease progression through measures such as chemotherapy, rehabilitation, and screening for complications (CDC)
 - o Our tertiary prevention approach revolves around the promotion and execution of the COVID-19 vaccines and early treatments. The COVID-19 vaccines provide minimal protection against contracting COVID-19 and are highly effective against hospitalization and death. The Health Department has/is:
 - Hosted many vaccination clinics, since Jan 2022, the health department vaccinates the community on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and some Saturdays.
 - Vaccinated and boosted immunocompromised and homebound residents in their homes.
 - Vaccinated and boosted seniors and residents of long-term care facilities at their facilities.
 - Hosted vaccination clinics throughout the Village, to aid in the accessibility of the vaccine and
 - Worked with Housing Forward to vaccinate unhoused community members.
 - Promoted the federal Test-to-Treat program.
 - Aided residents in finding early treatment for COVID-19.

- Connected community members with resources to aid in their quarantine/isolation, including connecting them to financial, medical, and social support services.

COVID-19 in Schools:

Due to the special nature of schools being a place where many people congregate for long hours each day, the potential for COVID-19 spread is known. With educating our children being a societal top priority, mitigating the risk to their health while in school settings is also of utmost importance. The Oak Park Public Health Department has worked with schools to mitigate COVID-19 since schools reopened in the Spring of 2021. This follows on a long history of the Health Department working with Village schools to mitigate communicable disease spread within these settings. This is a mandated activity of the health department, from both the Village of Oak Park code and the State's communicable disease code.

On February 17, 2022, the Fourth District Illinois Appellate Court dismissed an appeal of a Sangamon County Circuit Court order temporarily restraining the enforcement of Governor Pritzker's executive orders and Illinois Department of Public Health emergency rules mandating masks, close contact exclusions, and vaccinations or weekly testing in schools. *Austin, et al. v. Board of Education of Community Unit School District 300, et al.*, 2022 IL App 94th 220090-U. The Illinois Supreme Court upheld this ruling by denying a petition for the case to be heard on February 25, 2022.

The appellate court stated in its ruling that Circuit Court order did not restrain "school districts from acting independently from the executive orders or the IDPH [Illinois Department of Public Health] in creating provisions addressing COVID-19." There is currently no court order prohibiting school districts from imposing their own rules, but such rules may be subject to legal challenges similar to one brought against the executive orders and IDPH rules in the *Austin* case.

After the appellate court issued its ruling, public school districts located in Oak Park announced that they were changing their policies to recommend mask wearing and to no longer exclude asymptomatic, unvaccinated close contacts of individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19 from school.

Governor Pritzker released an executive order related to COVID-19 on April 29, 2022 where he states:

WHEREAS, the CDC continues to advise that some community settings, such as schools and high-risk congregate settings may require additional layers of prevention based on the characteristics of the setting and in the event of an outbreak; and,

WHEREAS, even without a State mandate, K-12 schools, childcare facilities, and other settings may choose to require individuals to wear face masks based on the community COVID-19 level and other characteristics of the setting.

To this end, the Health Department had issued guidance to the schools providing steps that should be taken to meet the three levels of prevention described above. One school district has been ordered to follow aspects of the communicable disease code which require notification of communicable disease to the Health Department in a timely manner. We are seeking cooperation from all of our schools in order to protect the health of our students, staff, faculty, and community members.

If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Theresa Chapple-McGruder, Public Health Director at 708-358-5480.