



Chippewa County Department of Public Health

711 N Bridge Street, Room 121, Chippewa Falls, WI 54729
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www.co.chippewa.wi.us/ccdph



Chippewa County Public Health Facebook Live Transcription

Date: March 27, 2020

Speakers: Randy Scholz, County Administrator, Chippewa County
Angela Weideman, Director/Health Officer, Chippewa County Department of Public Health
Media

Randy Scholz: Good Morning, My name is Randy Scholz, I'm the County Administrator for Chippewa County. First of all I'm going to have Angela Weideman, our Public Health Director, give an update and then I will continue with the press conference.

Angela Weideman: Good Morning, my name is Angie Weideman. I'm the Public Health Director for Chippewa County. Just wanted to give an update on the COVID-19 situation in Chippewa County. The health department is working diligently to insure the safety of the public. We recognize that this is a very rapidly changing situation. It's not always easy for people to make change and I know we have asked people to make a lot of changes recently. It is not easy, but it is needed to make those changes. At this time I just want to remind people that there is no right way to feel. Please allow yourself and those around you to feel whatever way they feel. Everybody deals with things in different ways and that is ok. We currently have 4 cases of COVID-19 in the county. Two new ones came in yesterday and then one this morning. We continue to follow-up with the individuals who have tested positive as well as their contact investigations. Contact investigations are anyone that person came in close proximity with. Everybody is following the recommendations and orders of the Health Department. Of our positive cases, I want to assure everybody that if you had any contact with a positive case that the health department will be contacting you to give you recommendations and follow-up information as well. For the HIPAA and security and safety of the positive cases we do not release much information about them. I can let you know that we do have two individuals under 30 and two individuals who are over 50 in the county. Just a few reminders that I want to give out for everyone in the community, you are safer at home. Please stay home and only go out if you need groceries or medication. We all need to work together to keep ourselves safe, but also to keep our community safe. Law enforcement, EMS, medical providers are working really hard right now and we need those individuals to stay as safe and healthy as they can stay. Right now, our top priority is keeping our main responders and medical field personnel safe and healthy so that they can care for others. Another reminder that I want to give from the Health Department is that anyone can contract COVID-19. People of all ages. Even people that are between 18-30 can test positive for COVID-19. So it is important for people of all ages to follow social distancing. Social distancing is going help us reduce the spread and flatten the curve so that less people are impacted with the virus. Again this is a rapidly evolving situation and please remember that the Health Department is your source for reliable and up-

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to-date information. If people have questions they can email us at COVID@co.chippewa.wi.us or they can call our Health Department at 715-726-7900. People can also call 211 for general information on COVID-19 or they can text COVID-19 to 211-211. If you are experiencing signs or symptoms of COVID-19 please reach out to your medical provider and they do like to have a heads up before people come in for testing.

On an unrelated note, I also did want to share that the Health Department yesterday did learn that we became a nationally accredited Health Department. PHAB, or the Public Health Accreditation Board is the entity that does Public Health accreditation. Our Health Department worked really hard for 2½ years to get ready for Public Health Accreditation and it was kind of a bright moment in a dull day. So we were happy to hear that. That process really means that we are a well-oiled machine, that we have policies and procedures in place and that we are making sure that we are looking out for vulnerable populations. So some of the things that relate to COVID-19 and accreditation are things like when we do our Facebook live posts we also transcribe it so that if somebody has any kind of impairment they can read versus hear what we are pronouncing and asking the public to do. We also plan on getting those translated into Spanish. Public Health accreditation really does help you look at who has access, who has service and who might need to have some special attention paid to them.

I would take any questions:

Media Question: Start with the obvious same question as with the first case, are any of these new three cases hospitalized?

Angela Weideman: None of our three new cases are hospitalized and I can also share that there is no connection between any of the four cases.

Media Question: Do we know, like the first case the person had traveled out-side the area; had any of these three traveled outside of the area?

Angela Weideman: So in two of our cases we know that people traveled outside of the area, and in two they had not.

Media Question: When you say travel outside of the area, does that mean out of the state or just out of Chippewa County.

Angela Weideman: Out of the state of Wisconsin.

Media Question: Can you say anything to their condition right now, are they doing well?

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Angela Weideman: Yes, so the good news is that all four of our positive cases are at home doing well. Our nurses are following up with them on a daily basis just to monitor their symptoms and to ensure that they continue to do well or have the support that they need.

Media Question: Like the other cases, are you guys following up with any contacts that these new cases had?

Angela Weideman: Yes, on all four cases we are following up with the contact investigations. On three of the cases we have already contacted and one just came in this morning so we are just starting to follow-up with contact investigations on our fourth case.

Media Question: Did the two who had not traveled outside of the area have a sense of where they might have contracted this?

Angela Weideman: We are actually still working with the individuals and the State of Wisconsin Epidemiologist to figure that out.

Media Question: Do we know, are all four of these single individuals, do they have family members that have vacated or staying in different rooms?

Angela Weideman: So I will say there is quite a various among the four cases of if they live alone or if they live with other family members. What I can say is the Health Department in cases where people do live with other individuals we do make sure that that person really is separate from everyone else in the household. That also is part of the reason why we really do follow-up with the symptoms and care needs just to make sure that if they do have high care needs that it is a medical professional helping rather than somebody that could potentially be exposed and not have proper PPE equipment.

Media Question: So when you do those follow-up interviews, I don't know if that is the right question, but people who have contact with those four individuals what things are discussed, what is the need of doing that?

Angela Weideman: Sure, great question. So when we follow-up with a contact investigation. First we always talk with the person who has tested positive to ask them who they have been in close contact with or close proximity. We ask how many people were you within six feet of. We make sure to take all their name and contact information and then we follow-up with that person and let them know that they did have contact with somebody who tested positive for COVID-19. We then ask questions about what kind of interactions they had. You know, where you in the same room? Did you have physical contact, hug, kiss, hold hands? Things like that, to just figure out exactly what that contact was like. Based on the variance of different levels of contact that they had the recommendations might look different. We also make sure we ask people about symptoms, if they are experiencing any symptoms

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themselves. We do have people symptom monitor and sometimes we have people get tested and symptom monitor. I do want to say that the Health Department is not doing the testing so we do refer people to their primary care providers to help with the testing.

Media Question: I know you are not being intentional vague, Angela, but can you say any more about how old those are that are over 50? Are they in their 50s, or in the 60s, 70s? I'm not trying to pin down an exact year, I don't need you to say they are 58, but can you say if they are in the 50s?

Angela Weideman: I will say they are older than 55.

Media Question: The two are older than 50?

Angela Weideman: Yes.

Media Question: I've seen on the state website it has a total number of people tested. I have not heard you say that before, do we have a total number tested in the county? Not positive cases, but just those tested?

Angela Weideman: I don't have an exact number on that, but I do know it is over 200.

Media Question: The folks are not in the hospital, can you speak at all to their symptoms? Are they still symptomatic? Are they in good health?

Angela Weideman: Good question, and I will say that it varies among the four individuals. The question is about their health and their condition. Some people seem to maintain a fever longer than others. So some of our individuals have had a fever for numerous days. Whereas others might feel a little bit fatigued, have a fever, shortness of breath seems to be a common theme among all of the patients.

Media Question: Since the two did not travel outside of the state, does that mean there is a chance of community spread within Chippewa County?

Angela Weideman: At this time, the State of Wisconsin is declaring that they have community spread, but Chippewa County is not necessarily declaring that yet. The reason for that is that we are still investigating, so we are still working with those two individuals to try and figure out what contacts they may have had and where they may have contracted COVID-19.

Media Question: To your national accreditation that you mentioned, what kinds of things do you guys need to do to get that official accreditation?

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Angela Weideman: Thank you for asking that question. For accreditation it is a lot of updating your policies and procedures and making sure you have systems in place for quality improvement. So you are always looking at data and then saying what could we do better, let's try this, did this work, did it not work? So it is really big on quality improvement. And then as I mentioned before, we talk a lot about vulnerable populations and making sure that we are messaging to everybody in our community.

Randy Scholz: I first wanted to thank Angela and her staff. They have been obviously working a lot hours a lot of our staff has and they have been doing an excellent job. I do attend Public Health meetings twice a day that they have for briefings and updates and I am so impressed with the professionalism and organization that they have had throughout this whole process. I can assure you that you are in good hands with what they are doing and how they are doing it. I would like to talk that earlier this week we did have our department heads come up with a plan to minimize the number of employees coming into work. The goal was to not have all our staff in the department at one time. The reason for this is we are trying to have a continuation of service and by not having all our staff in the department at the same time we are able to, if the area becomes contaminated or our staff becomes exposed, we can have other staff come in and continue our service. We are still moving forward with the press release we put out on March 19. The building is closed to all general citizens. The areas that are open are the Clerk of Courts and we have information out on website for that. The County Sheriff's Department, jail and Human Services. So if you come to the courthouse and it is closed, you will not be allowed in, unless it is one of those three departments. If for some how you do get into the courthouse you will be denied service at the departments that are not open. So you need to make sure that you call. Again we are trying to be as safe as we can. We are trying to be safe for our employees, safe for our citizens and still allow our service to continue. It is going to take longer and it is going to be different than what we are used to, but I'm very impressed with the plans that the department heads have put in and the fact that we are still able to continue to have service to our citizens, even though it looks a little different. Be safe, be careful out there. Just go by the recommendations that we are getting from our Public Health people and we will all get through this together. Thanks everyone.

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