



Chippewa County Department of Public Health

711 N Bridge Street, Room 121, Chippewa Falls, WI 54729
P: 715.726.7900 / 1.800.400.3678 / F: 715.726.7910
www.co.chippewa.wi.us/ccdph



Chippewa County Public Health Facebook Live Transcription

Date: April 1, 2020

Speakers: Angela Weideman, Director/Health Officer, Chippewa County Department of Public Health
Heidi Eliopoulos, Superintendent, Chippewa Falls Area Unified School District
Matthew Kelm, Police Chief, Chippewa Falls Police Department
Media

Angela Weideman: I want to share an updated with everybody today about the COVID-19 situation in Chippewa County, Wisconsin. Today we have 10 confirmed positive cases of COVID-19. Eight of those individuals have either traveled or been in contact with somebody else who was positive for COVID-19. We have two cases that we are still investigating with the State Department of Health Services. We have 4 individuals who are under 40 and 6 individuals who are over 40, who are positive with COVID-19 in the county. Our investigations are still ongoing and we continue to call individuals who have had case contacts with individuals who have tested positive. We also continue to get case contacts with individuals who have tested positive. We also continue to get case contacts from other counties as well and I do want to reiterate that viruses truly do not know county lines. They do not know who is at risk. We are all at risk and we really are safer at home. Please minimize your contact with people and crossing into other communities or counties as it keeps everybody safer and it is less follow-up for public health nurses to do case contact investigations. If you have come in contact with a confirmed positive case or person who tests positive, you will get a phone call from the health department asking you questions about if you have had symptoms or not and also giving recommendations.

We do want to let individuals and business know that if you do have any gloves, N95 masks or gowns that you would like to donate, please contact the Health Department at 715-726-7900. I think the community is doing a really good job following the guidance that is given by the President, by the Governor, by local Health Department officials. I definitely see people acting different. Giving six feet of distance, making sure that they are minimizing their travel and using travel specifically for grocery stores and getting medications. I want to just urge that it is very important that people continue that practice. The next few weeks is going to be a very critical period. The best that we can do to stay at home, we really are going to be able to keep other people from coming into situations of positive cases if can really all stay home. The COVID-19 pandemic can cause anxiety for some people and it can be difficult at times to change our typical practices. I think everybody is trying to get used to a new normal. Yesterday I had shared at a press conference that especially for kids, it can be good for adults too, to make a routine and to sit down with the kids and help make routines. I do want to let people know that even if you are working from home. If you work for some place that has an EAP provider those EAP providers are still open. Please feel free to contact those EAP providers if you are struggling

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at all or if anyone in your family is. There is also a lot of mental health providers in the community that are offering telehealth options. Please do not hesitate to call those mental health clinicians and those providers to see if they can offer telehealth options to you. I want to remind everybody too, that every child is different. Some kids get excited to be part of creating a new routine and writing it out on paper. Other kids might not find that so fun. For kids that don't find that as fun, if you can try to find one thing that child enjoys. Just for example, if you have a child that doesn't enjoy writing a routine out but they love science. Can you, as a parent, help them do one thing just to get started doing something educationally? We all know there are some kids that love school and they love homework and they will sit down and they just want to do it and there are other kids that don't. For those kids that don't just try to start small and try to start with one thing. Also ask them what one thing they may want to work on. Often there is a kid, even if they don't like reading, writing, or science, they might like physical activity. Focus on Phy-Ed for that child. We also have teams in the health department that has been working on initiatives to help combat social isolation by providing opportunities for connection. There will be a lot more details coming out soon as to everything the health department is doing to help facilitate connection within the community. I received a phone call after the press conference yesterday from a friend just saying, "I'm an adult connecting with my adult friends so I don't cause anxiety for my child." I really appreciated that and I would encourage people to continue doing things like that. I want to remind people to that the Health Department is your source for reliable, up-to-date, valid information. Please continue to stay at home as we get through this together. Our website is also updated daily. That includes case counts, testing locations, community resources, travel guidance and additional information as well. If you have any questions you can email us at COVID@co.chippewa.wi.us. I do want to thank the community for all the effort you are putting in to stay safer at home. I also want to thank our community partners for all our help we are receiving in our Incident Command System to keep the community safe. A special thank you to Heidi and Matt who have been joining for the press conferences and now I would like to introduce Heidi Eliopoulos from the Chippewa Falls School District.

Heidi Eliopoulos: Thank you Angie, and thanks so much again for having me here this afternoon to share an educational update. Since the start of the state wide school closure we've been providing a comprehensive set of online educational activities for students to complete at home. These activities are broken down by grade level, are age appropriate, and are aligned to academic standards. This has allowed student learning to continue at home during the closure. During this period of time we as a district have been working to close the access gap. At the initial time of closure our survey data revealed that only 80% of students had access to reliable internet services. This posed a significant problem, as it is key that teaching and learning be provided to all students regardless of their background, family resources or geographic location. Since the initial word of closure, we have worked to connect families to free or reduced cost internet services, have been securing cellular hotspots for families without other options and are finalizing a paper resource process for students who live in a geographic area where there is neither internet service or cellular service strong enough to support online learning. This is no small feat in a district of 5,200 students. But this work is key in ensuring that

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education is available for all students. Our initial teaching and learning delivery will continue through April 8 when we will transition over to our long-term virtual learning plan. Through the partnership between the Chippewa Falls Area Unified School District and McDonell Area Catholic Schools our collective lunch and breakfast program has provided nearly 10,000 meals since the start of the school closures. Lunch and breakfast is free for anyone 18 or under and can be picked up between 11:00am and 1:00pm at any of the 9 Chippewa Falls Area Unified School District locations and between 4:00pm and 6:00pm at McDonell Catholic High School. This service will continue throughout the duration of the school closures. We will be working with Feed My People Food Bank to resume weekend kids' meals to ensure that our youth also have food over the weekends. Several families are already enrolled in this program and signed up for this free service. Families should look for additional messaging from the school district this week if they would like to begin participating in this service. This program has no qualification criteria and is open to any youth in our community. Staff members of the Chippewa Falls Area Unified School District are helping to fill the need for poll workers across our communities. However, there is still a significant shortage of poll workers. The City of Chippewa Falls alone is still short 16 poll workers. Poll managers are developing systems and processes to ensure social distancing, physical barriers and hygiene practices for poll workers and voters. If you are a Chippewa County resident and are over the age of 18 please contact your municipal office and consider joining our staff in this service to our community. Beginning in the month of April the Chippewa Falls Area Unified School board meetings will be conducted virtually. While government process are considered essential, and could continue on as in person events we wish to be leaders and demonstrating alternatives to in person gatherings. As governmental body we will ensure that meetings remain accessible to the public. We will provide the link to watch our meetings online. We will provide a phone number that residents can call to request accommodations for viewing or participation and will make sure an in person viewing area is available. Meeting postings will include this information. Finally there is a great deal of information on the Chippewa Falls Area Unified School District website. This information is available to anyone, anywhere; you don't have to be a member of our school district. Please visit our site to learn about free internet services for families, about educational resources, services and activities being provided during the closure and for information on how to participate in any of our food programs. Thank you very much for giving me the time to share this update. Our Police Chief, Matt Kelm, of the Chippewa Falls Police Department will provide the next update.

Matthew Kelm: Good Morning, as a representative of law enforcement I just want to give a quick update this week on a couple of topics that are of concern to us. I am the Police Chief of Chippewa Falls and I can speak to that, otherwise please contact your local law enforcement department for rules and regulations and things that they are doing and how they are addressing these orders in your community. But in general when they call the dispatch center, don't be surprised if they ask you health related questions if you want a medic, EMT, firefighter, or police officer to come to your house, even if it is not a health related call. They will be asking you certain screening questions to make sure that our first responders are safe and have proper PPE when they come to assist you. Obviously for law

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enforcement it is important for us to ask community members to please follow the safe at home rules. Also follow the social distancing rules when you are outside. It is really important that the public do the right thing because it is the right thing to do. We don't have enough police officers to make everyone do this. We really need the public to step up during this time and do it for the good of the community. I am happy to report that the vast majority of people are doing this. We haven't had a lot of calls with people violating these rules which is amazing and just goes to show what an incredible community we have here throughout Chippewa County. Realize that if you are violating the rules and we get a call that takes up an officer's time that takes up a time that could be spent on other calls. Please continue to follow these orders, we want it all to end as soon as possible and by following the order will prevent the spread of COVID-19. Police departments are spending more and more time answering calls by phone or electronic means so don't be surprised if you receive a phone call for non-emergency call where you would normally have an officer show up. It is just our way to promote social distancing for the safety of our police officers, but also for your safety as well. You may see coming up more officers responding to calls especially if it is in person or going into a residence with masks or goggles or other PPE. As we prepare to make our first responders more and more safe as this continues, you may see things like that. These are preventative measures you don't need to be scared if you see an officer show up and coming to your house if they have a mask on or something like that. Or if we have reason to believe that there is flu like symptoms or something in the house, these are just preventative measures we are putting into place. Again, contact your local law enforcement for how they are going to handle their response. No matter what we will respond in an emergency. We continue to have officers operating at the same levels that we always have. If you need us we will be there. Just pick up the phone and call. Otherwise I just want to again thank people for doing the right thing. Again, the vast majority of the public is doing that and we thank you for that. We additionally had a flurry of calls about whether people are essential workers or businesses are essential businesses once we put out the request, to contact through proper channels, that has virtually disappeared. So the public really is responding in a fast manner and I think everyone is taking it seriously and I think they are responding appropriately. So thank you so much for what you are doing and please continue to do it as it was mentioned by the Public Health Director the next two weeks are critical. So please continue to follow those orders and let's get through this as soon as we can.

Media: Same question as the other day, are any of the ten hospitalized?

Angela Weideman: So the question is, are any of our ten positive cases hospitalized? Currently we do not have anybody hospitalized, however I will let you know that things can change very quickly. Even yesterday as I was doing the press conference in Eau Claire I said nine cases and one came in while I was doing the press conference. So I do want to say that we currently do not have anybody hospitalized but things can change very rapidly and abruptly. Our nurses check in with our positive cases on a daily basis and there is always potential for that to change.

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Media: And how many total people have been tested now in Chippewa County? Last number you gave was 200.

Angela Weideman: So we have over 350 people that have been tested and then kind of how it works is, in our system we can check, and we know that we have over 250 people that are considered not a case that means that a test result came back negative. We have over 90 people that are called suspect cases and that means we are waiting for a test result to come in. Confirmed cases are positive cases and then there is also a category called probable cases. Probable cases are either inconclusive testing results or that there is a person who has been in contact with somebody who is positive for COVID-19 who is showing symptoms but has not been tested. So we do make sure those folks are quarantined so that it isn't putting anybody else at risk since we don't have a test result for a probable case.

Media: Are any of our ten cases public health workers, EMS, fire, obviously I am hearing a lot of that concerns out east. Have we had any of that?

Angela Weideman: Currently we do not have any cases that are public health workers, EMS, or first responders. Thankfully and I do want to thank all of our community partners for working with us and taking things seriously. Our law enforcement has been absolutely amazing to work with and I really do want to give them credit because around the state that may or not be the case in other counties. So we are very fortunate in Chippewa County that our local municipalities our sheriff, our sheriff's department is taking this very seriously and they are really encouraging everybody to use proper PPE and providing them with equipment.

Media: You talked a bit about tests. Obviously we are hearing there is now one that can be done in as short as 15 minutes some in an hour. Sounds like what we have here is something that might take a day or two to get results back?

Angela Weideman: Correct, most of the individuals that are getting tested are going to either the drive through testing or the actual clinics themselves and it typically does take a day or two to get results back.

Media: Do you still feel like we have enough tests locally, I asked you before jokingly, everyone who wants a test can get a test and you said, so far you found that to be true. Is that still the case here?

Angela Weideman: I'm actually finding that things are getting better as far as accessibility to test and capacity for the labs to read results. So you know initially when things first started the State Department of Health Services and the Milwaukee City County Health Department were the two labs that were open and reading tests. Now there are lots of private labs and there is partnerships between the public and private labs so that has made it easier and quicker for people to get testing and get results back.

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Media: Can you talk about the importance of making routine and trying to make routine for your kids and stuff. Is that something that can like elevate anxiety, what is the purpose of doing that?

Angela Weideman: So the question is for making a routine for yourself or making a routine with your children what is the purpose of that? The question alluded to, is it related to anxiety? I would say absolutely. Good practice for people who have anxiety is knowing what to expect so when people feel like they know what to expect and that they have some control in their environment it definitely elevates anxiety. We use a program for AODA prevention with our school district that actually talks about different personalities and what they need. So that is really effective for a child or person with anxiety however for somebody that might be what we call a sensation seeker, sensation seekers are people that like roller coaster rides, riding motorcycles fast and things like that. They might not like to write their routine out, they like surprise, that person might want to go take a run, they might want to go outside, see something and not know what they are going to encounter but still practice social distancing and still give six feet between themselves and somebody else.

Media: I do have a question for chief, have we actually issued any tickets at this point or any citations to people for violating? Can you give me a sense of like how many times you have shown up and said, please break up this group, we don't want to write a ticket, can you give a sense of calls for service on that, on just breaking up groups?

Matt Kelm: I don't have any firm numbers on that as far as how many. I know that our city has not issued any citations, or made any arrests or referrals at this point. I'm sure that many officers have given verbal warnings, admonishment orders to groups, more or less encouraging them to do the right thing which is how we want to handle it. But as far as if any other communities within Chippewa County have we can find that out, but I don't have that right now.

Angela Weideman: Just wanted to say thank you again to the community and community partners and thank for joining us today.

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