



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Northern Illinois Rockford Region Public Information Officers
Media Contact: Katherine O’Toole, Media Liaison, 815-720-4213
September 23, 2020

This is a joint news release issued by the Northern Illinois Rockford Region Public Information Officers (NIR-PIO). NIR-PIO serves Boone, Carroll, DeKalb, Jo Daviess, Lee, Ogle, Stephenson, Whiteside, and Winnebago Counties.

REGIONAL HEALTH DEPARTMENTS CAUTION RESIDENTS THAT REGION MUST ACT NOW TO PREVENT WARNING FOR COVID-19

Northern Illinois Rockford Region (Region 1) – The Northern Illinois Rockford Region (Region 1) is close to being in warning level for coronavirus disease (COVID-19).

- The positivity rate for Region 1 has been steadily increasing
- As of 09/20/2020, **Region 1 positivity rate is 7.5%**
- A positivity rate of 8% for three consecutive days results in a warning level for COVID-19

If Region 1 goes into warning level, the Governor’s Office will mandate additional prevention strategies in the region to protect the public health. Examples include:

- Early closures and limited hours for bars, restaurants, gaming facilities, and casinos
- Further restrictions on indoor services and dining
- Reducing the number of guests for social gatherings

The Local Health Departments (LHDs) want our communities to move forward toward recovery and not have to return to stricter measures to prevent further rise in community spread of COVID-19 that is driving the increase in positivity rate. The LHDs cannot do this on our own. Each of us has a role in limiting the spread of COVID-19 in our communities.

Today, the LHDs ask the community to take these three additional steps to prevent Region 1 from going into warning:

1. GET A COVID-19 TEST. Testing is available at no cost for anyone in the community. You may not have symptoms, but you may be spreading COVID-19. For testing locations, contact your local health department or go to: <https://www.dph.illinois.gov/testing>
2. LIMIT CONTACTS. Identify a close group of contacts with whom you mingle and keep to that limited group. If your children are in school, keep the playdates to those that are in their class.
3. LEAVE. Be intentional about your action and activities. Leave a place where guidelines are not being followed, people are not masking or social distancing, or the gathering is too large.

The LHDs continue to remind the community that following these steps is needed to prevent the spread of COVID-19:

- WEAR A FACE MASK: Cover your mouth and nose with a cloth covering
- WATCH YOUR DISTANCE: Keep at least 6 feet apart from others
- WASH YOUR HANDS: Wash your hands regularly with soap and water for 20 seconds

Together, we can avoid going into warning and additional mandated restrictions. For more information on Illinois regional metrics go to: <https://www.dph.illinois.gov/regionmetrics?regionID=1>

For general questions about COVID-19, call the IDPH hotline at 1-800-889-3931

###