

Media Inquiries:

(630) 221-7374
media@dupagehealth.org

**DuPage County
Board of Health**

Sam Tornatore, J.D.
President

Lanny Wilson, M.D.
Vice President

Robert Spadoni, J.D.
Secretary/Treasurer

Lori Bottoms

Melinda Finch

Janice Guider

Nadeem N. Hussain, M.D.

Uzma Muneer, D.O.

Lawrence J. Schouten, M.D.

James P. Weeks, D.D.S.

Karen Ayala, M.P.H.
Executive Director

August 4, 2021

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

COVID-19 Vaccinations are Safe, Effective, and More Critical Than Ever

DuPage County—COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations continue to rise, and DuPage County remains in Substantial transmission according to county-level data from the [Centers of Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#). The DuPage County Health Department (DCHD) is once again strongly urging eligible residents to get vaccinated against COVID-19 as soon as possible. In DuPage County, over 99.9 percent of hospitalized and deceased COVID-19 cases since mid-December 2020 have been in persons not fully vaccinated against COVID-19. Vaccination continues to be the best form of protection against COVID-19, including the Delta variant, and helps prevent severe illness, hospitalization, and death in fully vaccinated people.

According to the latest [CDC COVID-19 vaccination data](#), 83 percent of eligible residents 12 years and older in DuPage County have received at least one COVID-19 vaccine dose, and 66 percent are fully vaccinated. Of residents 65 years and older, 99 percent have received at least one COVID-19 vaccine dose, and 83 percent are fully vaccinated. However, among 12 to 17-year-olds in DuPage County, 68 percent have received at least one COVID-19 vaccine dose, and only 49 percent are fully vaccinated.

Although the risk of COVID-19-related hospitalization and death is lower in children than adults, the risk is not zero, and no number of pediatric deaths is acceptable for any family or community, particularly when we have effective mitigation strategies to prevent the spread of this illness. Furthermore, infected children and adolescents are efficient at spreading COVID-19 in households, schools, and communities to adults who may be at greater risk of severe illness, hospitalization, and death. DCHD strongly recommends the practice of those simple, safe, and highly effective measures available to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and incidence of pediatric hospitalizations and deaths, including vaccination of all eligible persons, universal indoor masking, and physical distancing.

Given the high mixing of vaccinated and unvaccinated people in schools and

-More-

that vaccines are not available to children under 12, DCHD supports the CDC and Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) COVID-19 prevention

recommendations. These recommendations reflect the need for universal indoor masking by all teachers, staff, students, and visitors in K-12 schools regardless of vaccination status or community transmission level. Children should return to full-time in-person learning in the fall with layered prevention strategies in place.

“This school year, we want all children to have access to safe, in-person instruction. By implementing the evidence-based prevention strategies outlined by CDC and IDPH, we will help protect students, staff, and their families,” said Karen Ayala, Executive Director of DuPage County Health Department.

“Preventing the spread of COVID-19, keeping our children and their families safe, and meeting their educational and social needs are not mutually exclusive goals. We are committed to working with residents, community leaders, school districts, healthcare professionals, and others to ensure our students can safely return in-person and remain in school this fall.”

Furthermore, it remains critical we realize that individuals who are immunocompromised do not enjoy the same level of protection from vaccination that others do. For those individuals, as well as unvaccinated individuals, we ask all residents to continue practicing [preventive measures to protect people](#) at greater risk of contracting the more transmissible variants. It is still extremely important to help interrupt and prevent community spread; persons with COVID-19 infection need to self-isolate (e.g., stay home except for medical care) and their close contacts need to get tested after exposure. Close contacts should also self-quarantine unless they have been fully vaccinated against COVID-19 or have had COVID-19 infection within three months of exposure. Updated recommendations on masking based on vaccination status and setting are available [here](#).

Testing remains essential to detecting, monitoring, and curbing the spread of COVID-19 and the variants in our community. DCHD encourages individuals (regardless of vaccination status) who have taken part in activities that put them at higher risk for COVID-19 including travel, attending large social or mass gatherings (including the recent Lollapalooza Chicago music festival), or being in crowded or poorly-ventilated indoor settings to get tested. For more information about when to get tested for COVID-19 and the types of tests available, visit www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/testing.html. To find testing locations in DuPage County, visit www.dupagehealth.org/covid19testing.

As vaccination efforts continue, there are various options for members of the community to get their COVID-19 vaccine in DuPage County. Anyone seeking

COVID-19 vaccination should visit www.vaccines.gov to find a nearby vaccine provider. In addition, the [DCHD Community Vaccination Clinic](#) in Wheaton offers COVID-19 vaccines Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The DCHD Care Van mobile clinic is another option that provides free COVID-19 vaccinations directly to DuPage County communities. To view this week's schedule [click here](#). Additionally, any DuPage County residents who are homebound or who cannot safely leave their residence to visit a vaccination clinic are eligible to be vaccinated through our homebound vaccination program and should register at dupagehealth.org/covid19vaccineregistration, or call (630) 682-7400 for assistance.

Additional COVID-19 vaccine information about local efforts, frequently asked questions, vaccination data, and more is available at www.dupagehealth.org/covid19vaccine.

For general questions about COVID-19 and Illinois' response and guidance, call 1-800-889-3931 or email DPH.SICK@ILLINOIS.GOV.

###