



**Quad Cities COVID-19 Coalition  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
September 29, 2020**

**Current COVID-19 case count**

**Scott County** – Total of 3,059  
Total deaths in Scott County: 28

**Rock Island County** – 32 new cases since Monday; total of 3,124  
Currently in hospital: 21  
Total deaths in Rock Island County: 82

**Today's call**

A video recording of today's media briefing can be found at  
<https://www.scottcountyiowa.com/health/covid19/news>

**Drive-through flu vaccine clinic on Wednesday**

Remarks from Nita Ludwig, administrator, Rock Island County Health Department

The Rock Island County Health Department will hold a socially distanced drive-through flu vaccination clinic from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Sept. 30 at the Greater Quad City Auto Auction, 4015 78th Ave., Milan. The event is open to anyone. To expedite the process, bring a filled out and signed consent form that is available at richd.org.

RICHD also will offer walk-in flu vaccination clinics inside the health department, 2112 25<sup>th</sup> Ave., Rock Island. The clinics are 9 a.m. to noon and 1-4 p.m. Oct. 13, Oct. 20, Oct. 27 and Nov. 10. Masks and social distancing requirements will be enforced.

At all RICHD flu shot clinics, there is no out-of-pocket expense to those with Medicare Part B or an Illinois Medicaid card. Most Blue Cross, UnitedHealth Care, Health Alliance, Aetna, Coventry/First Health, HFN, HealthLink, and Humana insurance plans are accepted. Please bring all insurance cards with you to the drive-through and walk-in clinics. For those not using insurance, the cost is \$35. High-dose vaccines for seniors are \$55 without insurance.

**Cases rising quickly**

Remarks from Edward Rivers, director, Scott County Health Department

Today we will be joined by community partners who serve the senior population in our community. We know that seniors are often one of our most vulnerable populations and they

rely on the protective actions of the rest of us in order to stay safe from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Unfortunately, in the past few weeks, we have continued to see an increase in cases. Our current 14-day average of cases is getting dangerously close to the value we were seeing during our surge in July. As a community, we are still trying to recover from that. In the month of August, Scott County saw 11 COVID-19 related deaths. This one month total was the same as the previous four months combined.

Our current increase in cases are not just in school-aged persons, but in all ages. This means that the increase is due to community spread. The most likely cause is individuals gathering in groups, not social distancing, and not using masks to help reduce the spread.

As we enter the flu season, this is worrisome. As we've noted before, our health care system utilizes the same resources to treat individuals with COVID-19 as it does for individuals with influenza. If COVID cases remain elevated it could create challenges to our local health system that it may not be able to surmount. We plan to talk more about this topic on Thursday's briefing.

Our ask of our community is to do the inconvenient yet vital things that will protect our neighbors, friends, family, workforce, and healthcare system. Wear a mask. Don't gather in groups. Keep distance between yourself and others. Lastly, be honest when you're feeling sick and make the right decision: stay home and don't spread the virus to others.

### **Effects of social isolation for older adults due to COVID-19**

Remarks from Jennifer Boedeker, director of field education and clinical instructor at St. Ambrose University School of Social Work

#### **Social Isolation**

- Serious public health risk
- Recent report from National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine identifies the health risks associated with social isolation and loneliness
  - “Significantly increased a person’s risk of premature death from all causes.”
  - “Associated with about a 50% percent increased risk of dementia.”
  - “Higher rates of depression, anxiety, and suicide.”
- Prior research and programs to support efforts addressing social isolation

#### **COVID**

- Older adults are at a much higher risk for severe illness
- Safety guidelines to protect end up making them even more socially isolated and inactive
- Potential detrimental effects to physical and mental health

### **Physical Health Effects**

- Critical for older adults to remain physically active
- COVID-19 safety guidelines has caused a drastic decrease to physical activity
- Not safe or able to go to places
  - Grocery store
  - Religious services
  - Clubs- cards, book, etc.
  - Senior Center
  - Places for physical exercise- gym, golf course, pool, etc.
- Increased risk of falling

### **Mental Health Effects**

- Critical for older adults to remain socially active
- COVID-19 safety guidelines has forced older adults into social isolation
  - Decreased contact with others
  - Remain in home and limited public outings
  - Barriers to use technology to communicate
- Increased rates of depression, stress, and anxiety

### **Community Support**

- Check on and connect with older adults
  - Phone call
  - Virtual call
  - Send a letter
- Wear a mask and maintain social distance
- Encourage older adults to stay active
  - Stretch
  - Walk
  - Dance to music
  - Exercise 30 minutes a day
- Share information and resources

### Reference

National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. 2020. Social Isolation and Loneliness in Older Adults: Opportunities for the Health Care System. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. <https://doi.org/10.17226/25663>.

## **Remote senior services in Illinois**

Remarks from Holly Brugman, community outreach coordinator at Western Illinois Area Agency on Aging

Western Illinois Area Agency on Aging serves Rock Island County and nine other counties in including Bureau, Henderson, Henry, Knox, McDonough, Mercer, LaSalle, Putnam and Warren counties in Western Illinois. We fund 10 Community Focal Points to provide services to older adults and their caregivers in all 10 counties. These agencies provide:

- Senior Center activities
- Information & Assistance
- Connecting older adults to community programs and services they may be eligible for and they are interested in including SNAP,
- Outreach Services for older adults who are homebound and cannot come into an agency to receive assistance
- Benefit Access Services (Illinois license plate discount and rides free bus passes in several counties)
- SHIP counseling
- Caregiver Information & Assistance including assistance with respite care and supplemental services such as assistive technology, lift chairs, ramps etc.
- Services to address older adults who are socially isolated
- All Community Focal Points are also congregate meal sites

During the COVID-19 shelter at home and shut down of group activities all Community Focal Points listed above closed all in person activities. Due to this shut down our Community Focal Points are contacting all the older adults they serve by phone at least weekly. Their employees and trained volunteers are providing a weekly wellness check and engage the older adult in social conversation also.

They continue to offer some group activities:

- Remote learning series Well Connected. These workshops may be accessed via telephones, smart phones or computer.
  - Music programs
  - Meditation
  - Book Clubs
  - Bible Study
  - Garden Talk
  - Poetry Reading
  - Sports Talk
  - Travel Pursuit

- Writing Workshops
- Museums at Home
- Parking lot Bingo

The Nutrition Providers in the 10 counties also call their participants weekly including the older adults who participated in congregate dining at the senior centers. Their employees and volunteers also provide weekly phone calls for wellness checks and social conversation for older adults who received a HDM or who received a meal thru congregate sites.

All Home Delivered Meal providers are utilizing check in calls with their participants on a regular basis. Many of the transportation providers are also calling and checking in with the people they have provided services for. One area reports that all their Home Delivered Meals program drivers who deliver meals to homes of older adults have been creative in packaging of the meals, in boxes or bags that are delivered to the home and left on the porch. The driver then calls the participant and lets them know the meals are on the porch. They chat with the participants until they come out to get the meals. Many older adults state this is one of the few interactions they have with people daily.

Western Illinois Area Agency on Aging and our Community Focal Points have been working towards implementing technology and helping older adults connect with programs online/virtually. We are in the process of developing recorded workshops that will be available on our web site and to all Community Focal Points in our 10 county area. Technology access and knowledge of utilizing technology has been a challenge, particularly in rural counties where internet is unreliable and in some cases unavailable. The state of Illinois is making efforts to address the “digital divide” by providing some funding to offer a program called, “Illinois Care Connections.” ICC is offered through Illinois Adaptive Technology Partners, and is a referral-based program providing free devices (tablets) and in some case free wifi service for a year, to individuals experiencing social isolation or looking for more engagement opportunities, particularly to address a lack of interaction opportunities during Covid-19.

Western Illinois Area Agency on Aging also provides the evidence-based falls prevention program “Matter of Balance.” This program is in the process of developing a remote learning platform. They are testing to make sure that all the elements of the remote learning program meet the evidenced based outcomes for this program.

Western Illinois Area Agency on Aging and all of our grant funded provider agencies are very concerned about the health and wellness of the high risk population we serve and of our employees. The reopening of the Community Focal Points, Congregate meal sites and other programs and services for older adults and their caregivers will be based on the Coronavirus metrics in each county.

### **Third speaker**

Laura Kopp, president and chief operating officer at CASI-Center for Active Seniors Inc., did not speak from prepared remarks. She talked about several virtual programs that CASI is offering. More information can be found at [casiseniors.org](https://casiseniors.org) .

### **More information**

- [www.TogetherQC.com](https://www.TogetherQC.com)
- [coronavirus.iowa.gov](https://coronavirus.iowa.gov)
- <https://www.dph.illinois.gov/covid19>
- <https://www.dph.illinois.gov/regionmetrics?regionID=2>
- <https://www.dph.illinois.gov/countymetrics?county=Rock%20Island>
- <https://www2.illinois.gov/idoc/facilities/Pages/Covid19Response.aspx>
- <https://www.dph.illinois.gov/covid19/long-term-care-facility-outbreaks-covid-19>

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