

## **CENTRAL DISTRICT HEALTH DEPARTMENT COVID-19 UPDATE**

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: June 30, 2020**

At this time, and in communication with the Governor, we believe that our COVID numbers support our transition to Directed Health Measure (DHM) Phase III on July 6, 2020. Our attention to slowly advancing from Phase I to Phase III is paying off in good health for our community. Details of DHM Phase III and COVID-19 Nebraska Guidance Documents can be found at: <http://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/COVID-19-Nebraska-Guidance-Documents.aspx>.

COVID-19 viral activity in the Central District is down. For the last three weeks, each of our three counties has had a positivity rate of less than 10%. We attribute the steady decline in viral activity to our community's cooperation. We see more people wearing masks every day. Wearing masks or cloth face coverings is a vital part of preventing the spread of the virus. We know that some people who carry the virus do not have symptoms and can unknowingly spread the virus to others. We also know that people can spread the virus before they start to feel ill. Many people wear masks to protect others from getting ill along with staying healthy themselves.

Even though our COVID-19 numbers are low, we know that the virus is still present in our community. Many people who test positive are not aware that they have been around someone with COVID-19. This tells us that there continues to be low level community spread. If we continue to practice safe health measures now and in the future until such time as we have vaccine available, we can keep the viral activity low.

We continue to require event forms to be completed for those planning gatherings for indoor and outdoor facilities that have capacity of 500 or more. This form serves as a guidance document for planning safe gatherings that minimize the possibility of spreading the virus. It can be found on our website at [cdhd.ne.gov](http://cdhd.ne.gov). Additionally, we are working with long term care facilities to help them complete the requirements to move into Phase III, which includes COVID-19 testing of all staff. We are working closely with schools in the district to develop COVID-19 plans for return to classrooms in the fall. And we are working to build CDHD capacity for the next surge of COVID.

We are concerned with the news of rapidly increasing COVID activity in other states. Because we are entering a holiday weekend and because we will enter Phase III on Monday July 6<sup>th</sup>, we cannot stress enough the need for both social distancing and the use of cloth face coverings on a regular basis. Any questions regarding proper use should be directed to us at CDHD. We are hopeful that we can celebrate the holiday weekend safely and that we do not see an increase in the number of cases 2-3 weeks down the road. Staying safe while enjoying time with family and friends is more important than ever.