



Greene County Public Health

Melissa Howell MS, MBA, MPH, RN, RS, Health Commissioner
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Press Release

For Immediate Release
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Greene County Elevated To Level 3 By Ohio Department of Health

GREENE COUNTY, OH – Today, the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) announced that Greene County has been elevated to Level Three ("Red") status on the Ohio Public Health Advisory System. Greene County Public Health (GCPH) has been tracking an increase in COVID-19 cases in the county over the past month.

These alert levels are based off new cases per capita (184.7 per 100,000 residents), proportion of cases not in a congregate setting, sustained increase in outpatient visits (11.3 average visits on 9/27 to 22.0 average visits on 10/12), sustained increase in COVID-19 hospitalizations (0.7 average admissions on 10/7 to 1.9 on 10/13).

A Level Three ("Red") classification means there is severe exposure and spread in the county. Residents should continue to follow all standard precautions and health orders.

As with all previous emergencies, GCPH has been responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. Several sectors of the community have opened successfully and remain open. State and local officials are continuously monitoring the course of disease transmission and providing guidance to minimize the spread of COVID-19. Through monitoring and increased testing, officials can identify trends and make recommendations. This will help keep more Ohioans and residents in Greene County safe and healthy.

Greene County Health Commissioner, **Melissa Howell** says, "GCPH was notified that Greene County would increase to Level Three ("Red") in the Ohio Public Health Alert System earlier today. We have been tracking an increase in cases over the past several weeks among the general public as well as at universities and nursing homes, and we have been working to continue our contact tracing efforts to assist with controlling the spread of the virus in the county. All residents should maintain a healthy respect for Sars Co-V 2. If you have become complacent about social distancing, handwashing and wearing a mask, or lulled into a false sense of security, now is the time to take action to protect you, your family and the community. In addition to the recommended protocols, we strongly encourage everyone ages 6 months and older to get this year's flu vaccine".

To control the spread of the virus within Greene County, Health Commissioner Howell recommends the following evidence-based guidance and recommended actions:

- Please remember when online to get the facts on COVID-19 from reputable sources including the CDC, the Ohio Department of Health and your local public health agency.
- The public is urged to stay home when they are sick (except to seek medical care), wear a face covering, cover coughs and sneezes, wash hands frequently, avoid close contact with others and avoid crowds.

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- The elderly and those with weakened immune systems should stay at home as much as possible.
- All businesses and operations are required to follow social distancing and face covering requirements set forth by the Ohio Department of Health Director's Order.
- All employees must wear a face covering when not able to maintain a 6' social distance, including serving customers at check-out and during customer service interactions. Employee face coverings are not required in a private office when alone.
- By order, all individuals in Greene County must wear a face covering in public both indoors and outdoors when they are unable to maintain a social distance. Exceptions include when in your own residence and when it is not medically advisable to do so.
- Employers should explore ways for employees to work at home or explore shift rotations.
- Enhanced COVID-19 cleaning protocols using EPA approved products should be used by businesses and building management, with added attention to high touch surfaces.
- The public should not attend large social events or gatherings.
- Events designed to bring people together should not take place. Examples of events that should not be held, include, but are not limited to; festivals, block parties, group picnics, art shows, outdoor concerts, tastes of the city, parades, fireworks, food truck rallies, conferences / conventions, car shows, running races / walks, spectator sports.
- Churches are encouraged to provide in-vehicle and / or online services.
- K-12 schools are required to follow the Ohio Department of Health and the Ohio Department of Education's COVID-19 health and prevention guidance.
- Personal travel should be limited. If you must travel:
 - travel alone or only with your consistent quarantine partner(s) and,
 - avoid current national COVID-19 hot spots.

For more information on COVID-19, visit **GCPH's COVID-19 page at healthalert.gcph.info/COVID19**, or call ODH's call center at **1-833-4-ASK-ODH** or visit www.coronavirus.ohio.gov.

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