

Knox Public Health

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Risk level in Knox County elevated to ‘red’

Knox County was upgraded today (Thursday afternoon) to “Red - Level 3” on the Ohio Public Health Advisory System. The increase to “Red - Level 3” is attributed to: an increase in cases per capita; the increase in new cases during the past two weeks; an increase in outpatient visits with COVID-19 like illness; and the fact that nearly all of the new cases are NOT within a congregate setting.

Knox County was one of 12 new counties designated as “Red” today (Thursday). There are now 68 of Ohio’s 88 counties at a “Red - Level 3” risk level.

The elevated risk level for Knox County comes after a recommendation for increased restrictions from Knox County Health Commissioner Julie Miller on Monday and a revised mask order and new restrictions on the social activities for all of Ohio, announced by Gov. Mike DeWine on Wednesday.

The move to “Red” means there is a very high exposure to COVID-19 in Knox County. According to the Risk Level Advisory System, residents should limit activities as much as possible and follow all current health orders. Limiting activities pertains to all gatherings including those involving families, businesses, schools, churches and social get-togethers. “Unless, it is absolutely necessary, we are recommending that residents postpone or reschedule all gatherings, personal and professional - and if people do get together, everyone needs to be masked and socially distanced,” said Miller. “It is through gatherings – personal and professional - that people are becoming infected.”

Additionally, on Wednesday DeWine emphasized that the order limiting public events and private gatherings of more than 10 people is still in effect. However, due to rampant spread of the virus as a result of banquets, wedding receptions, and social gatherings following funerals, the Ohio Department of Health will issue an order that will place significant new restrictions on these social activities. Specifically, open congregate areas will no longer be permitted to open, and everyone will be required to be seated and masked unless they are actively consuming food or drinks.

The Governor also issued a new mask mandate for all employees and customers in retail settings. Businesses will be responsible for enforcing the mandate and a new retail compliance unit, comprised of agents led by the Ohio Bureau of Workers’ Compensation, will inspect businesses to ensure compliance. A first violation will result in a written warning and a second violation will result in closure of the store for up to 24 hours.

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