



Quad Cities COVID-19 Coalition
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 17, 2020

Civil servants and elected officials from both Scott and Rock Island counties continue to coordinate emergency preparedness responses for the Quad Cities region in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

As of 4:30 p.m. Tuesday, no positive cases have been reported in either Scott or Rock Island counties. However, all Quad Citians should continue to assume that COVID-19 is circulating in the community, whether or not a positive test is recorded in either Rock Island or Scott counties.

“We understand that people are scared during this uncertain time,” said Nita Ludwig, public health administrator at the Rock Island County Health Department. “However, we urge people to listen to the advice of public health professionals and health care providers who are working hard to spread accurate information within our community. Please don’t spread rumors or play upon the fears of others.”

We urge you to get your information from reputable sources, including the CDC, the Iowa and Illinois departments of public health and the health departments of Rock Island and Scott counties.

Living in a bistate community has complicated, but not hindered, the response to this public health emergency. We respect the authority of both states to make decisions in response to the spread of COVID-19 in their respective communities, but this fact has meant that certain differences exist between community responses.

“We hope the public’s understanding of our response will help reduce fear and increase their understanding of the seriousness of this situation,” Ludwig said. “Your actions today will impact the community as a whole.”

This is a compilation of public health efforts:

Social gatherings

- The CDC has updated its COVID-19 guidance related to social gatherings. CDC has changed guidance for social gatherings and recommends individuals should avoid all social gatherings of groups greater than 10 people. This is a change from the previous recommendation of 50.
- However, at this point, Gov. J.B. Pritzker has not changed his original proclamation of 50 people, which is the enforceable standard in Illinois.

- With the closing of schools and now bars and restaurants in each of our communities, this includes private gatherings of individuals as well as organized gatherings of individuals of greater than 10 people.
- Social distancing is one of ways that we can all work together to slow the spread of COVID-19.

Illinois restaurants and bars

- All bars and restaurants in Illinois are closed to dine-in guests, by proclamation of the governor. Many still are offering food for carryout and delivery.
- City and county health inspectors and other city officials, including law enforcement, are handling enforcement of this closure. Violators could be subject to citation.

Iowa governor's proclamation

- Iowa Governor Kim Reynolds issued a proclamation to all restaurants and bars to be closed to the public by noon Tuesday.
- Food and beverages may be sold if they are promptly taken from the premises, such as through carry-out, drive-through or delivery.
- Her proclamation also includes: fitness centers, theaters, casinos and gaming facilities, mass gatherings, senior centers and adult daycare facilities.
 - **Mass gatherings**, for purposes of the order means “Social, community, spiritual, religious, recreational, leisure, and sporting gatherings and events of more than 10 people, including but not limited to parades, festivals, conventions, and fundraisers.” A clarification from the Iowa Department of Public Health indicates that it does not include businesses and healthcare facilities. Additional messaging on this issue will be forthcoming.

Preventing the spread of COVID-19 and other illness

- Wash your hands
- Avoid touching your face
- Cover your cough or sneeze.
- Stay away of social gatherings of more than 10 people
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects

Testing

We recognize there continues to be questions about COVID-19 testing in the community. We feel it is important to take time and explain how the testing process works for individuals:

- If you believe you have symptoms (fever, cough, shortness of breath), call ahead to your provider.
- Describe your symptoms.
- Your provider will use a process to determine if you need to come in to be evaluated.
- Even if you have mild symptoms, stay home.

- If your provider decides they should take a sample for testing, your sample will go to a lab for testing for COVID-19.
- Even if you give a sample for testing and the test is negative, you are likely still showing signs of illness and can transmit to others. Stay home.
- For those who are ill with COVID-19 or other similar illnesses, you will be expected to isolate yourself (positive or negative test result) until you no longer have symptoms.
- Please follow these guidelines to help us prevent the spread of illness in our communities.

It is also important to help describe the differences between Scott and Rock Island County Health Departments and their access to testing numbers.

Iowa

- Scott County Health Department will not be able to speak to the number of Scott County residents tested for COVID-19.
- Private labs in Iowa are not required to report to the Iowa Department of Public Health the number of tests performed.
- Therefore, the Iowa Department of Public Health will not have a running count of the number of individuals that have been tested for COVID-19.
- The Iowa Department of Public Health will continue to report on the following:
 - The number of positive tests by county.
 - The number of individuals monitored by local/state public health in Iowa.
- Positive test results will be released by the Iowa Department of Public Health.

Illinois

- In Illinois, local public health agencies are giving medical providers and hospitals an authorization to test for COVID-19. However, we don't know whether all of the tests in Rock Island County are coming through this channel because private labs also are testing.
- As of 4:30 p.m., we had authorized 28 tests, with 13 negative and 15 pending.
- The Illinois Department of Public Health will announce when and if we have a positive case in Rock Island County.

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