

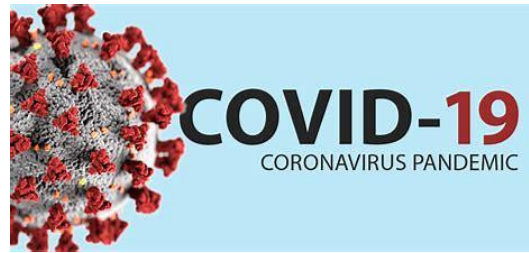
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***A Message from:***

***Hardin County Judge Wayne McDaniel***

***June 19, 2020***

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The Hardin County Health Department (HCHD) serves Hardin and Orange Counties. Since Monday, our Public Health Department personnel have investigated over 70 new cases of COVID-19 for both counties. Hardin County's total number of lab-confirmed positive Coronavirus cases as of 4:00PM today is 173, and total number of active COVID-19 cases is 34.

By "investigated", I mean that each person who reportedly resides in the two counties who has tested positive, as confirmed by a public or private lab, is contacted by HCHD personnel to: Determine how they are doing (are they sick or asymptomatic); Confirm their residence address is located in Hardin or Orange County; Obtain names and contact numbers of every person they have been in close contact with during a period of time; Then, call each of those contacts. It is a process.

We continue to have issues with medical providers not notifying public health of positive cases of COVID-19 and we are working on a solution to this problem. More people than you would expect list a Hardin or Orange County address as their place of residence, but during the investigation it is learned that they actually live in a different County, sometimes far away from here. Some who test positive for COVID-19 have had close personal contact with over 200 other individuals that each have to be called by HCHD personnel. This is all a daunting task, and although this has been ongoing for about three (3) months now, it is still relatively new, but is also overwhelming at times.

I write all of this to let you know what your Public Health personnel have endured for the past months, including our Health Authority, Dr. Jana Winberg, and to ask you to join me in commending them for a job well done. They will continue to work hard for you in an attempt to keep you and your families as safe as possible while we continue to navigate through this global pandemic.

I believe the trend of increased cases of COVID-19 will occur for the foreseeable future. Until there are vaccines and therapeutics available to combat this disease, we must continue to make safe and smart choices to prevent the spread, including:

- Practice Social Distancing
- Wash or sanitize your hands thoroughly and often
- Wear a facial covering (mask)

I am aware there are those who feel that I and other Officials should make it mandatory for citizens to wear face masks while in public businesses now that the Governor has restored some local authority to County Judges and Mayors which allows us to do so. There are at least as many people who feel that I would be overreaching if I decided to issue such Order. At this time, I feel the decision is yours to make. Just as the Surgeon General warns us of health risks associated with tobacco products and drinking alcoholic beverages, he recommends that we don a face mask when out in public. It is up to each individual person as to how we observe such warnings and suggestions.