



## Hospital Systems and Wright County Public Health Joint Statement Regarding the COVID-19 Situation October 2021

As the health care leaders of Wright County, we have an important message to share regarding reducing the spread of COVID-19.

We are watching with growing concern as COVID-19 cases increase in Minnesota, fueled by community spread in all parts of the state. Demand for hospital care is increasing, and the percentage of beds occupied by patients with COVID-19 is growing.

In the past week (September 30 – October 6), Wright County has seen a 46.45% increase in cases compared to the previous week, according to the CDC Data Tracker. Wright County continues to have a higher case rate (1,515 cases per 10,000 people) and positivity rate (7.9%) than the Minnesota state average (1,325 cases per 10,000 people, 6.0%). This high level of transmission not only impacts those suffering from COVID-19, but also the community at large.

The current demand for testing in Wright County is surpassing previous surges. We are also seeing an increase in the need for health care services including intensive care, to the point where there has not been an open Intensive Care Unit bed in Minnesota since September 28<sup>th</sup>. These issues, along with a crisis-level staffing shortage affecting many health care organizations, are placing extra burdens on our health care system. The compounding stressors impact not only those in need of testing and those in need of care related to COVID-19, but also those experiencing any other health emergency.

The challenges we are experiencing in our local health care systems are mirrored in all communities across Minnesota. Reducing and preventing community spread is critical to helping keep our health care heroes healthy and hospital beds open.

It is time for our Wright County community members, schools, and workplaces to once again do our part to make sure our hospitals have enough space to care for our community — including you and your loved ones who may unexpectedly need hospital care. We urge you to get your COVID-19 vaccine, wear a mask and practice physical distancing. Follow guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention when available. Please do your part to cut down on the number of COVID-19 cases in our community, and help us care for you.

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