

**(Corrected 9-9-21 @ 2:18pm)**

## **NEWS RELEASE**

**From: Montgomery County Board of Commissioners**

**Date: September 9, 2021**

**Re: COVID-19**

Our long fight against the Coronavirus (COVID-19) continues. In June and July of this year, it appeared that we had gained substantial ground. Weekly cases in Indiana had dropped from a high 7,899 in December to the low 131. Persons hospitalized because of COVID-19 had dropped from a high on 3,381 in November to 399. The vaccine had been available and many people had taken advantage of that opportunity.

Despite our optimism, the Delta Variant, which now accounts for 98% of cases, caused a surge of new cases here and across the United States. Weekly cases in Indiana are up to 5,419, and in Montgomery County we are experiencing about 225 new cases each week. Although the number of new cases has not reached the level of new cases during the height of the pandemic (7,899), new cases have increased about 40 times the number we were experiencing just a couple of months ago.

This surge in cases has put significant strain on our health care system. Our local and area hospitals have very few beds available, and at times no beds available, due to the surge and the diminished availability of health care providers. Statewide, less than 20% of the Intensive care beds are available. Locally, only 12% of intensive care beds are available. Schools have been forced to revisit return-to-school plans and policies.

The recent surge has forced government leaders to reassess strategies that effectively address the facts on the ground. In order to keep everyone in our community as healthy as possible, we all need to do our part in the fight against COVID-19. And there is a lot we can do to lower the chances of contracting COVID-19. Some of the measures we can take are:

1. If you have not been vaccinated, consider doing so now;
2. Practice social distancing when possible, and consider wearing a mask when social distancing is not possible;
3. If you are sick, stay home;
4. If your children are sick, do not send them to school;
5. Be mindful of your own health. Make changes which will make you healthier and consult with your doctor regarding steps you can take to improve your overall health;
6. If you have had COVID-19, consult with your doctor regarding whether and when to obtain a booster vaccine when it is made available;

7. Practice good hygiene by washing hands frequently and using hand sanitizer often;
8. If you are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, consult with your doctor to see what treatment is right for you.
9. If you have COVID-19 or if you have close contact with someone who does, follow the quarantine and isolation protocols in order to protect others.

This is not a complete list of all of the preventative measures available, but these simple measures will help us greatly as we work together to fight this recent surge.

We are hopeful that if we all do what we can that the surge will come and go as it has in other parts of the United States. But in order to shorten this surge, we need your help.

There has been much said by many about COVID-19. We understand that each individual must make decisions regarding what is best for them. But we belong to the same community. We would ask that everyone be respectful of each other. We may not always agree with our friends, neighbors, co-workers, and relatives, but we can still do our part to help each other. It is what we should do. It is part of what makes Montgomery County a special place.

Finally, we appreciate the significant service of our doctors, nurses, and other healthcare professionals who have worked hard to take care of us – often at great risk to themselves – during the pandemic. We are especially appreciative of our Health Administrator Amber Reed and her team at the Montgomery County Health Department, our Health Officer Dr. Scott Douglas, and Assistant Health Officer Dr. John Roberts for their tireless work during these challenging times. We also appreciate employees of the City of Crawfordsville and the many volunteers in the community who have helped with testing and vaccinations. Despite the challenges, these professionals and volunteers have risen to the occasion. Let's continue to work together for the good of everyone.