

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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### **CORONAVIRUS DISEASE (COVID-19) IN MCPHERSON COUNTY**

Effective January 31, 2022, the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) will be taking over all McPherson County COVID-19 case investigations. If you are diagnosed with COVID-19, you may call 785-542-6625 or email [KDHE.COVIDinvestigation@ks.gov](mailto:KDHE.COVIDinvestigation@ks.gov). You may also receive a text message from KDHE asking for you to complete a survey that will prioritize your need to be contacted based on your relation to congregate settings or need for an isolation letter. If you have a positive COVID-19 home test, we continue to recommend seeking lab confirmation by getting tested at a testing site. If you cannot do so, we recommend following isolation guidelines that can be found here <https://www.coronavirus.kdheks.gov/.../Isolation--Quarantine-Guidance-and-FAQs-PDF---12422>. It is the goal of McPherson County Health Department staff to continue updates on the McPherson County COVID-19 Dashboard, however some data like known exposure versus unknown exposure will no longer be reported.

In December 2021, McPherson County reported 596 cases of COVID-19. As of January 2022, we have reported 1,712 cases of COVID-19 and counting. With over 700 active cases of COVID-19 in our community at the time of this release, MCHD begs you to take appropriate precautions. Our schools, businesses and healthcare system depend on each person to do their part.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) have changed the isolation and quarantine guidelines, which may be referred to as "the 5/5 rule." People who test positive continue to have a 10 day isolation period, however, if the case is 24 hours fever free without fever-reducing medication and feels significantly better on day 5, they may leave home isolation on day 6 but only if they mask when around others through their 10 day period. If they cannot mask, they cannot leave home isolation. People who are named a close contact will continue to have a 10 day quarantine period, however, if the close contact is asymptomatic and/or tests negative on day 5, they may leave home quarantine on day 6 but only if they mask when around others through their 10 day period. If they cannot mask, they cannot leave home quarantine. A infographic explaining this further can be found at <https://www.coronavirus.kdheks.gov/DocumentCenter/View/1086/Isolation-Quarantine-Release-Graphic-KS-PDF---11922>.

The KDHE and MCHD will no longer contact trace effective February 1, 2022. This does not mean close contacts no longer need to quarantine. This means that close contacts will not be called by the state agency or local health department. This is in response to the overwhelming case counts and will allow the state agency and the local health department to prioritize case investigations. Positive cases will be instructed to contact their close contacts to notify them of the exposure.

The KDHE has also adopted a temporary 30 day suspension of K-12 school contact tracing, effective January 18, 2022, in response to the current surge of cases and pressure that is being placed on the school system. MCHD staff has met with county public schools to discuss the impact of this decision. MCHD has encouraged McPherson County schools to continue to notify families of school-related exposures and implement mask policies. MCHD encourages families that have students in school to regularly monitor your children for symptoms of illness, keep them home if ill and seek medical care and testing. Please continue to notify your children's school if your child is ill. Two school districts in McPherson County participate in the KDHE Test-to-Stay program and MCHD encourages those programs to continue to function as they have been.

As of this release, there are 88 confirmed variant cases out of 104 tested specimens. More information regarding COVID-19 variants can be found at <https://www.who.int/.../tracking-SARS-CoV-2-variants/>.

- Variant B.1.1.7 (Alpha): 6
- Variant B.1.617.2 (Delta): 28
- Variant AY.2 (Delta): 17

- Variant AY.3 (Delta): 16
- Variant AY.4 (Delta): 10
- Variant AY.7 (Delta): 1
- Variant BA.1 (Omicron): 10

The travel and exposure related quarantine list can be found at <https://www.coronavirus.kdheks.gov/175/Travel-Exposure-Related-Isolation-Quaran>.

COVID-19 data in McPherson County can be found on the home page of [mcpersoncountyks.us](http://mcpersoncountyks.us), under "McPherson County COVID-19 Dashboard." This data will continue to be updated Tuesdays and Thursdays of each week. Written releases like this one will be posted as needed.