

IREDELL COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Iredell County Health Department

EDITORIAL

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TIME

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High Transmission of COVID-19 in Iredell County

I know that there is not a person reading my editorial that isn't sick and tired of hearing about COVID-19. I get it. We all feel that way but unfortunately the brief reprieve that we had from COVID-19 a few short weeks ago is gone. If you are ignoring all of the warnings that are being sounded loudly by federal, state and local public health officials then you are making a grave mistake for yourself and your family.

We are facing a new viral strain that produces 1,000 times the virus that will be found in the mouth or nose of someone infected. Coughing or sneezing will put so much more virus in the air causing 3 to 4 times the number of individuals to get the virus from a single infected person. We have seen the number of weekly positive cases go from a low of 27 in late June to 332 in the last week. The number of new cases per 100,000 population was 30 on July 1st and 301 on August 3rd. Our percentage of positive tests has climbed to over 10% from a low of 1% during the early summer months. The number of Iredell County residents hospitalized has almost tripled over the last week. If this trend continues, our hospitals could become overwhelmed making it difficult to care for others with serious health issues that are not COVID-19 related.

Maybe you don't care about the data. But to me, it represents real people. Real people who, as they were being put on a ventilator because of COVID-19, wish they had followed the science and gotten vaccinated. Real people who wish they had taken Grandma to be vaccinated instead of losing her to COVID-19. Real people who are losing income because they are sick from COVID-19 or unable to work while they care for sick family members.

There is only one way out of this pandemic. As much as I'd like to wave a magic wand and make it go away, I can't. Each one of you will have to do your part. Get vaccinated! The Delta variant is spreading like wildfire throughout our community but the COVID-19 vaccines are still very effective at preventing serious illnesses. If you assume that your previous infection will give you enough antibodies to fight the Delta variant, think again. The Delta strain wasn't the strain that initially infected the majority of our residents. We really don't know if your immune system will mount an adequate response against this strain of virus because it might not be recognized as the enemy. Immune systems aren't created equally. I could have a strong response from prior infection and another individual have a very weak response. Vaccines are consistent in how they work and in how they protect you if infected.

We should all bring our masks back out and start wearing them again regardless of our vaccination status. This is especially important if we are around others indoors and can't socially distance. Even vaccinated individuals can get infected with the Delta strain and spread the virus to others. Usually only mild illness results from

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704-878-5300

Mooresville Site
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349 N. Center Street
Statesville, NC 28677
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infection if you have been fully vaccinated whereas serious illness, hospitalization or death could result from infection if unvaccinated.

I'll end with this. Once you or a loved one gets infected, it's too late to be vaccinated. Even with the best medical care and treatment, some will die. Some will be hospitalized for weeks and months as they are trying to be weaned off a ventilator. Many others, even some who had mild illness, will suffer from "long COVID-19" for many months making it difficult to function in a normal capacity. I am begging you to look closely at the science before you decide not to get vaccinated. Your life may depend upon it.

If you have any questions, please call the Iredell County Health Department COVID-19 Vaccination Hotline at 704-878-5300 and then press 1.

Iredell County Health Department COVID-19 Vaccine Information: <https://www.co.iredell.nc.us/1455/Vaccine-Information>

Additional information related to COVID-19 can be found at the following links:

Specifics on the COVID-19 vaccine: <https://covid19.ncdhhs.gov/vaccines>

NCDHHS-DPH: www.ncdhhs.gov/covid19

CDC: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html

Iredell County Health Department: <https://nc-iredellcounty.civicplus.com/1383/Coronavirus-COVID-19>

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