



December 8, 2021

Joint Statement

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

With COVID-19 cases reaching their highest rates in nearly a year and hospitalizations on the rise, Kenosha County Public Health and the two hospital systems serving the community are urging the public to take precautions to prevent further spread of the virus and serious illness.

As of today, the seven-day daily average of new cases in Kenosha County is 69.4 per 100,000 people — the highest rate since Jan. 12, 2021, when the rate was 71.4 daily cases per 100,000.

At present, there are 62 COVID-19 patients admitted to the Aurora Health Care and Froedtert South hospital campuses in Kenosha County. This is the highest total since Dec. 8, 2020, when there were 66 COVID-19 patients in hospital care. The county's peak level of COVID-19 hospitalizations was on Dec. 6 and 7, 2020, when 71 people were in care.

“Like other providers in Wisconsin and Illinois, we’re seeing COVID-19 hospitalizations rise steadily. Over the past month, our COVID-19 inpatient census has more than doubled,” said Donna Jamieson, President of Aurora Medical Center Kenosha. “The best way to prevent COVID-19 is to get vaccinated, and if it’s been long enough since your first shot(s), to get boosted. The vaccines are the most effective tool we have to prevent serious illness, hospitalization and deaths.

“Froedtert South is fortunate to have two hospital campuses, Froedtert Pleasant Prairie Hospital and Froedtert Kenosha Hospital,” said Ric Schmidt, President of Froedtert South.

“Consequently, we have been able to treat the COVID-19 inpatients at our downtown hospital, Froedtert Kenosha Hospital, and continue the treatment of our other patients at Froedtert Pleasant Prairie Hospital. This permits us to continue with our elective surgeries and procedures at Froedtert Pleasant Prairie Hospital while isolating the growing number of COVID-19 inpatients at Froedtert Kenosha Hospital where our COVID-19 caregivers and resources can be consolidated, creating better care for our patients.”

“Unfortunately,” Schmidt added, “we are seeing an escalating number of COVID-19 inpatients at Froedtert Kenosha Hospital which is starting to parallel our peak 2020 numbers with almost all the patients being unvaccinated.”

Kenosha County Health Officer Dr. Jen Freiheit said the current caseload locally is not associated with the Omicron variant, which to date has logged a limited number of confirmed cases in Wisconsin, all outside of Kenosha County. Rather, Freiheit said Kenosha County is continuing to see a significant spread of Delta variant cases.

“With the holidays coming up, it’s ever more important to get vaccinated against COVID-19, and to wear a mask and socially distance when you’re around unvaccinated people,” Freiheit said. “Gatherings where there may be a mix of vaccinated and unvaccinated people present a risk to everyone in attendance, and people should make considerations and plan accordingly.”

Vaccination is now readily accessible in Kenosha County to all people ages 5 and up, at hospitals, clinics, and pharmacies. A list of providers is available at <https://www.kenoshacounty.org/covid-19>.

This Friday, Dec. 10, Kenosha County Public Health will host a community vaccination clinic from 4 to 7 p.m. in the Job Center at 8600 Sheridan Road, Kenosha. Appointments are recommended but not required; they may be made online at <https://vaccinate.wi.gov/en-us> (select the “Kenosha County Public Health Mass Clinic”) or by calling 262-605-6799.

People who are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 and/or have been a close contact with someone who has tested positive should get tested to help prevent further spread, Freiheit said. A list of local testing locations is available at <https://www.kenoshacounty.org/2058/COVID-19-Testing-Locations>.

SIDEBAR: COVID-19 case, hospitalization and mortality rates by vaccination status

In Kenosha County, vaccinated individuals have much lower rates of COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations and deaths, Health Officer Dr. Jen Freiheit noted.

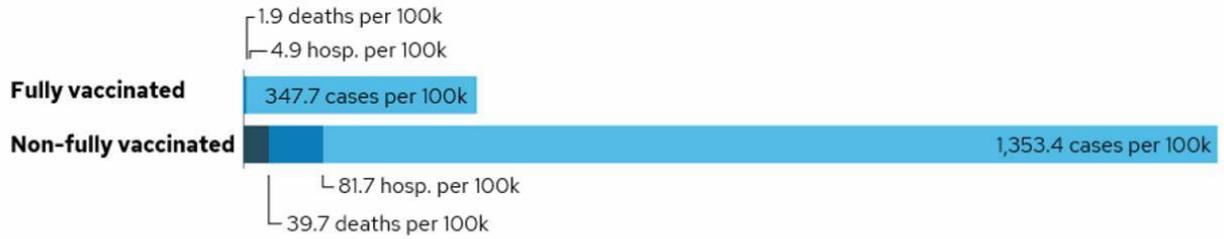
During the month of October, age-adjusted COVID-19 hospitalization rates were 4.9 residents hospitalized per 100,000 fully vaccinated residents, and 81.7 residents hospitalized per 100,000 non-fully vaccinated residents, according to data compiled by Kenosha County Public Health’s epidemiologist.

“That equates to a 16-fold greater likelihood of hospitalization for non-fully vaccinated versus fully vaccinated residents,” Freiheit said.

The county’s COVID-19 death rate during October showed an even starker comparison: 1.9 deaths per 100,000 population for fully vaccinated residents, compared with 39.7 deaths per 100,000 for those who were not fully vaccinated.

“The numbers make it clear that vaccination is saving lives and preventing serious illness,” Freiheit said.

Kenosha County case, hospitalization and mortality rates by vaccination status – October 2021



*Rates are age-adjusted and are per 100k by group. For example, there were 81.7 hospitalizations per 100k non-fully vaccinated residents in October (age-adjusted).

###