



NEWS RELEASE . FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Oklahoma County COVID transmission in the red

(Oklahoma City) - The Oklahoma City-County Health Department warns that Delta variant's prevalence is increasing, causing the County to move into the red category on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) metrics dashboard, which tracks community transmission across the nation.

"We've known this was coming," said Eddie Withers, lead epidemiologist for OCCHD. "As of this week, we still have 47% of our population that is unvaccinated. This includes children under 12 who cannot get the vaccine yet, but there are 80% of teens age 12-17 who have not yet received the vaccine," Withers added.

As of July 23, there is a 99% increase in the weekly case rate with 624 total cases in the past 7 days, and a weekly positive rate of 10.4%. Additionally, Oklahoma County hospitals are seeing on average 12 new admits each day due to COVID-19.

As the COVID-19 Delta variant continues to become more prevalent in Oklahoma County, OCCHD is pleading with the public to get the vaccine as soon as possible. For individuals who are unvaccinated, the agency stresses the importance of wearing a mask and/or social distancing to protect against the Delta variant. All three OCCHD clinics are offering the COVID-19 vaccine.

The agency emphasizes mitigation measures used at the heights of the pandemic are still critically important as children and youth come back home from summer camps.

"We are very concerned with the level of outbreaks we've seen at popular summer camps across the state," added Withers. "As the summer vacation period winds down and children are coming back home, we want to make sure parents are watching for signs of possible COVID-19 infection, and encouraging children to wear a mask and social distance when possible," Withers added.

The largest statewide uptick in cases last month was seen in residents age 15-34, with the highest increase in people age 15-24 years old. From July 11-17, the highest statewide uptick was in people age 25-44, with more men dying than women.

Testing

OCCHD encourages everyone to get tested if they have symptoms such as coughing, fever or chills, sore throat, new loss of taste or smell, or difficulty breathing. Some people who have tested positive for the Delta variant did not report losing their taste or smell.

“COVID-19 symptoms can easily be confused with an allergy issue, which is why it’s safer for someone and their family to get tested,” Phil Maytubby, chief operating officer at OCCHD, mentioned in a press conference last week.

“The best tool we have to understand how the Delta variant is impacting our community is through COVID testing,” said Maytubby. “We urge all Oklahoma County residents to get tested if you are showing symptoms or believe you have COVID-19. The testing data helps public health officials slow the spread of variants in our community.”

For information on vaccination locations in Oklahoma County, individuals are encouraged to visit www.vaxokc.com. OCCHD’s Southern Oaks location offers free polymerase chain reaction (PCR) tests. Free COVID—19 testing is available at www.testokc.com.

To learn more about the Delta variant, visit the CDC variant classifications and definitions website at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/variants/variant-info.html>