

An Open Letter to the Community

Dear Community,

Washington County cases of COVID-19 continue to increase, with our highest daily case count in the pandemic thus far occurring on November 14 with 420 new cases identified. Our county's 14-day case rate continues to rise at an alarming pace, with our last reported count at 118.9 per 10,000 people.

The rapid increase in COVID-19 cases is affecting hospitals across the region, including Lakeview and Woodwinds hospitals in Washington County. While healthcare systems are in a better position than they were in the spring to deal with high COVID and non-COVID caseloads, they are facing significant stress. Hospital beds and intensive care units are reaching capacity. Most importantly, hospitals are experiencing staffing shortages as healthcare workers need to quarantine or care for their family members.

Data shows that most virus exposures are happening outside of the healthcare setting. Together with our partners at HealthPartners and M Health Fairview, we are calling on all residents to do their part to slow the spread of COVID-19 in Washington County. Healthcare workers have been working tirelessly for more than eight months to care for those most in need. During this challenging time, we must come together to support one of our community's valuable resources, the healthcare workers serving our community.

While we work toward having a vaccine and more effective treatments, research and data help us to make informed decisions about the best tools to prevent new infections. The recommended and proven public health prevention strategies include:

- Stay home when you're sick and waiting for COVID-19 test results
- Avoid gathering with people you don't live with
- Wear a mask in public and around people you don't live with
- Stay at least 6 feet away from others
- Wash your hands often

When you take these steps, you're supporting healthcare workers and protecting your loved ones, your friends, your neighbors, and yourself. As a community, we can #FaceThisTogether.

Sincerely,



Fran Miron, Chair
Washington County Board of
Commissioners, District 1



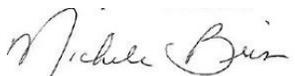
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