

MEDIA RELEASE

Information Advisory Warning Update

DATE: SEPTEMBER 8, 2021

TIME: 5:00pm

MEDIA CONTACT:

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St. Clair County Health Department Issues Revised County Public Health Order

The St. Clair County Health Department (SCCHD) issued a revised Public Health Order for COVID-19 quarantine measures. The revised Order takes place immediately and replaces the August 20, 2021 Order and remains in effect until further Order of the Medical Health Officer.

Revisions were necessary to include options allowed by the CDC and MDHHS in various settings. Dr. Annette Mercatante, Medical Health Officer for St Clair County stated, *“The goal is to reduce viral transmission risk while allowing the most flexibility for in-person learning and maintaining an intact workforce. There is considerable variations in risk depending on individual situations and we hope that this order clarifies those differences while still protecting our community. We acknowledge the fluid nature of these quarantine options but also emphasize that they are based on the best-evidence and practice outlined by the consensus of experts in the field, with the primary goal of reducing the negative impact of COVID-19 infections”*.

“Quarantine” is when you may have been exposed to COVID 19 (within 6 feet of an infected individual for 15 minutes, cumulative or consecutive) but are not having any symptoms. **“Isolation”** should occur once you have tested positive or become ill and typically lasts 10 days regardless of vaccination status, masking or work/home environment. Both are important and effective tools to prevent spread of disease.

The revised Order outlines expanded **quarantine** options for:

- 1) 7 day quarantine with testing at or after day 5 OR a 10 day quarantine without testing (for unvaccinated or partially vaccinated, masked or unmasked) for all residents.

- 2) Fully vaccinated individuals (masked or unmasked): additional precautions for testing and masking after exposure for all residents.
- 3) Students in a **universal masked setting** have expanded exemptions for quarantine including quarantine exemptions with exposure >3 feet and a “Test to Stay” option with serial, daily testing while remaining in the classroom with exposures <3 feet.
- 4) Students in an un-masked (or partially masked) setting have a 10 day without testing or a 7 day with testing quarantine option.

SCCHD issues orders pursuant to the Michigan Public Health Code, MCL 333.2451 and 333.2453, as well as R. 325.175(4), which is an administrative rule promulgated by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services pursuant to MCL 333.2226(d).

For the full order and additional resources, visit www.scchealth.co

The St. Clair County Health Department continues to monitor the situation and will respond accordingly to best protect our community.

Updates are available on the health department website www.scchealth.co and on social media @scchdmi.

#END#

STATE OF MICHIGAN
ST. CLAIR COUNTY
ST. CLAIR COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT

In the Matter of:

PUBLIC HEALTH ORDER
PURSUANT TO MCL 333.2453
ESTABLISHING PROCEDURES FOR THE QUARANTINE
OF PERSONS IDENTIFIED AS COVID-19 CLOSE CONTACTS

Matters of concern to the health of St. Clair County citizens having been brought to the attention of the Medical Health Officer of the St. Clair County Public Health Department, and the Medical Health Officer having made the following determinations, issues this Order pursuant to the Michigan Public Health Code, MCL §333.2453 (1), to establish procedures to be followed by, and restrict the public gathering of, healthy persons identified as close contacts of a known or probable case of COVID-19:

DETERMINATIONS

1. MCL 333.2453 (1) gives a local health officer the authority to issue emergency orders necessary to control an epidemic and insure the continuation of essential public health services and the enforcement of health laws; including orders to establish “. . . procedures to be followed by persons . . .” and to prohibit “. . . the gathering of people for any purpose.”
2. Limiting community transmission of the infectious agent that causes the COVID-19 disease is a significant factor in the control of the current epidemic and is necessary to protect the public health of the citizens of St. Clair County.
3. Quarantine of healthy persons who are a close contact, is necessary to control the community transmission of COVID-19.
4. The St. Clair County Department of Public Health determines that a person is a close contact based upon the guidelines issued by the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, as applied to the local conditions of the COVID-19 epidemic in St. Clair County, at the time of the contact.
5. Controlling community transmission has a demonstrated positive impact on the course of the COVID-19 epidemic, and reduces the strain on hospitals, emergency medical services, ambulance and patient transport service, and other essential public health services.
6. An increasing degree of public pressure has been directed at schools, employers and other organizations to ignore the significant public health benefit of quarantine and permit active participation of close contacts in school, sports, the workplace and other public events, despite the increased risk such conduct poses to specific populations or community transmission of COVID-19 during the current epidemic in St. Clair County.
7. If failure to quarantine becomes widespread the control of community transmission will become a more significant public health problem.
8. Quarantine by Health Officer Order will assure employees that they can use the non-retaliation provisions of the COVID-19 Employment Rights Act; MCL 419.401, et seq.

9. Schools, employers, and other organizations have asked the St. Clair County Public Health Department for guidance concerning the quarantine of close contacts.

10. COVID-19 is unique as a communicable disease in that every person that eventually becomes infected with COVID-19 is able to transmit the disease to others for at least a 48 hour period before they become symptomatic, or otherwise have any reason to know that they can make other people sick; and, at least 20% (and in some populations as many as 40%) of all known positive cases will never become symptomatic, yet they are fully able to transmit the disease and make other people sick.

11. In St. Clair County, in the past 2 months, 22.4% of all confirmed positive COVID-19 cases were first identified as a close contact of another probable or confirmed positive case, before they became positive themselves.

12. Since March 16, 2020, St. Clair County has experienced 19,514 laboratory confirmed positive cases of COVID-19. As of September 6th, 2021, St. Clair County has a 7-day test positivity rate of 9.7%, and a 7-day new case per 100,000 count of 133.1. These statistics indicate both epidemic level contagion and substantial community transmission

13. Because a close contact is able to infect others with COVID-19 before they, or the St. Clair County Public Health Department, have a reasonable basis to believe that they harbor the specific infectious agent that causes COVID-19 certain procedures are required, including the quarantine of healthy persons who have been close contacts of probable or known positive COVID-19 cases.

14. These procedures, and restrictions on public gatherings of close contacts are necessary to maintain the public health of the citizens of St. Clair County, and control the COVID-19 epidemic.

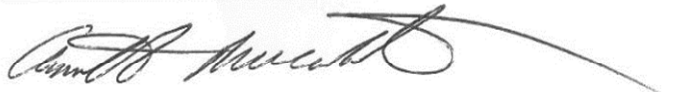
Based on the preceding determinations IT IS ORDERED, by the authority provided in MCL 333.2453 (1):

- A. Any individual who resides, attends school or is employed within St. Clair County that is notified by the St. Clair County Public Health Department, Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, a local school district, or an agent thereof, that they are a COVID-19 close contact, is ordered to quarantine for ten (10) days, or 7 days with a negative diagnostic test on day 5 or greater, or such other duration as may be required in a written public notice issued by the St. Clair County Public Health Department. This applies to individuals who were both masked and unmasked at the time of exposure.
- B. A fully vaccinated individual who comes in close contact with someone who is COVID-19 positive can remain in school/work if they wear a mask and monitor for symptoms for 14 days after their exposure. They should test for COVID-19 3 to 5 days after their last exposure to the COVID-19 positive person. If the exposed individual tests positive, then the individual should isolate. This applies to individuals who were both masked and unmasked at the time of exposure. Additionally, exposed persons should remain masked in public settings until a negative test result is received or quarantine is completed.

- C. K-12 students within an indoor school setting at a St. Clair County school may have their quarantine modified if:
 - a. Both the student who was exposed and the student infected were masked and the students remained 3-6 feet apart. The exposed student can remain in school if they continue to wear a mask, but they should monitor for symptoms for 14 days following the exposure OR
 - b. Both the student who was exposed and the student infected were masked and the students were less than 3 feet apart. The exposed student can remain in school if they wear a mask. They should monitor for symptoms for 14 days and test daily before coming to the school building for the 7 days following exposure (as testing supplies allow). They should continue to monitor for symptoms for a total of 14 days following the exposure.
- D. Upon request, confirmed and probable cases, businesses, schools, and other facilities must provide the names and phone numbers of individuals with possible COVID-19 exposure to MDHHS and local health departments to aid in contact tracing and case investigation efforts.
- E. The quarantine must occur at the person's home, or at such other location, that will permit them to refrain from public contact or gatherings, whether indoors or outdoors.
- F. The quarantine shall occur in the manner recommended by the CDC Guidelines and approved by the medical health officer, at the time the contact occurred.

- G. An employer, school, or other organization that requires or permits a close contact to act contrary to this Order is also in violation of this Order and subject to the penalties prescribed by the Michigan Public Health Code.
- H. A person or organization who violates an order of a local health officer is guilty of a misdemeanor and subject to serious civil and/or criminal penalties per MCL 333.2443.
- I. Administrative relief from this Order may be granted in appropriate circumstances. A person aggrieved of this Order must first notify the St. Clair County Corporation Counsel of all the reasons that this order should not apply to them. Within two-business day following said notice, the St. Clair County Health Officer or his designee will issue a written response affirming, revoking, or modifying this Order as it applies to that specific person. After this response, if that person is still aggrieved of the order, that person may seek judicial review under MCL 333.2462 (2).
- J. This order is effective immediately upon signature, and remains in effect until further Order of the Health Officer.

IT IS SO ORDERED



Annette Mercatante, M.D., M.P.H.
Medical Health Officer
St. Clair County Public Health Department

Date and Time Signed: September 8, 2021 @ 4:30
p.m.