

## Media Alert

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



**PublicHealth**  
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**Winnebago County  
Health Department**



SCHOOL DISTRICT OF  
**OMRO**

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### **ALERT: COVID-19 Case Spike Identified in Omro**

Health Department encourages community members to get tested  
and follow quarantine guidelines to end the surge

OMRO, WIS (Feb. 15, 2021) – The community of Omro is experiencing a spike in the number of positive and probable COVID-19 cases. High school students gathering outside the school day appears to be one driver of new cases, with some cases being sports or extracurricular related and others community related. While the majority have done their part to help stop the spread, it appears a lack of testing exposed and/or symptomatic persons started a rapid chain of transmission at many group gatherings.

"With so many families now effected it is important to alert the community as a whole of the increased risk of exposure to COVID-19," stated Doug Gieryn, director/health officer for Winnebago County Public Health Department. "We commend the School District of Omro for rapidly identifying and responding to the spike in cases," Gieryn added.

At this time, Omro High School has reported at least 12 new student cases, 20 total cases and over 170 close contacts. Omro High School will have no in-person classes for at least this week. In an effort to slow the spread of the virus the school district has been working diligently with the Winnebago County Health Department on contact tracing. Additional cases are anticipated. The City of Omro has the highest case rate of COVID-19 over the course of the pandemic of any municipality in the Winnebago County jurisdictional area. Case rates in the City of Omro are about 30% higher than the average rate. "The Omro community needs to pull together now to slow transmission by following public health guidelines that include testing, masking, following quarantine guidelines and avoiding gatherings with people outside of your household," stated Linda Kutchenriter, Administrator-Treasurer for the City of Omro.

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The Winnebago County Health Department recommends getting a COVID-19 test if exposed or in close contact to someone who has tested positive. Testing is recommended no less than 4 days after the day of exposure. See [the WCHD website](#) for a listing of free testing locations. As most virus transmission occurs before symptoms are experienced, physical distancing and proper mask wearing continues to be vital to minimizing the spread.

"The School District of Omro continues to work in partnership with the Winnebago Department of Health Services to help minimize the spread of COVID-19 in our community. We want to remind all of our parents/guardians that if you have a child who is symptomatic, it is important to keep them home and have them tested," stated Dr. Jay R. Jones, Superintendent of the School District of Omro "Additionally, if you have a positive case in your home, are experiencing symptoms, or have come in close contact with someone with COVID-19, it is important to properly quarantine, get tested, and work with contact tracers to share information. It is critical to remember that all of us must work together to minimize the spread of COVID-19 and keep our schools open."

It's important to remember that gatherings bring a high level of risk for getting and spreading COVID-19. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the more people an individual interacts with at a gathering, and the longer that interaction lasts, the higher the potential risk of becoming infected with and spreading COVID-19. According to the CDC, the risk of spreading COVID-19 at events and gatherings increases as follows:

- Lowest risk: Virtual-only activities, events, and gatherings.
- More risk: Smaller outdoor and in-person gatherings in which individuals from different households remain spaced at least 6 feet apart, wear masks, do not share objects, and come from the same local area (e.g., community, town, city, or county).
- Higher risk: Medium-sized in-person gatherings that are adapted to allow individuals to remain spaced at least 6 feet apart and with attendees coming from outside the local area.
- Highest risk: Large in-person gatherings where it is difficult for individuals to remain spaced at least 6 feet apart and attendees travel from outside the local area.

The Winnebago County Health Department reminds everyone to be responsible and do their part to stop the spread of infection. Additional recommendations include:

- Staying home, especially if you are not feeling well
- Isolating from others if you are waiting for test results
- For those who are able, wearing a mask when in public
- Avoiding gathering and crowding together with people that you do not live with
- Washing your hands often for at least 20 seconds
- Keeping a distance of at least six feet from those outside of your household
- Getting tested if you or someone in your household is experiencing symptoms
- Adhering to proper quarantine guidelines

For questions or concerns, contact the Winnebago County Health Department's COVID-19 hotline at 920-232-3026. For up-to-date information, please frequently monitor the Winnebago County Health Department [website \(https://www.co.winnebago.wi.us/health\)](https://www.co.winnebago.wi.us/health).