

# KENT COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT



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## **PUBLIC HEALTH BULLETIN October 15, 2020**

### **Incidence of COVID-19 is increasing in all age groups and throughout most areas of the county**

- Our positivity rate as a county is now up to 4.5% which is a significant increase from previous weeks. We are exceeding 150 cases/million.
- Local hospitals are at capacity with both COVID and non-COVID patients.

### **School COVID-19 incidence trends**

- Our numbers of people testing positive that are related to schools is rising. Our middle school and high school numbers are significantly higher than the elementary numbers. The rate of positive cases in elementary age children is about half of the rate for people age 12-17 years (both nationally and in Kent County).
- Through our contact tracing, we are seeing very limited transmission of the virus from the classroom setting. Most of the new infections among students can be traced to social activities and sports activities.
- The number of close contacts which have to be placed in quarantine is rising. During the month of September, the average number of close contacts per positive case of COVID-19 was 6.4. During the week of October 11-15, the average number of close contacts per positive case was 9.3.

### **What does this mean?**

- Per the MALPH guidance for schools, virtual school should be considered for all districts
- We recognize that despite increased community transmission, to this point there has been limited transmission within schools.
- To mitigate COVID-19 spread in the schools in a setting where more people will have community exposure:
  - a. Use measures to increase spacing within the classroom. Consider alternative models for educating students.
  - b. Address the risk to athletes and their families
    - i. Educate students and families of the risk of COVID-19 on vulnerable household members, family, and friends
    - ii. Consider changes to the athletics calendar
  - c. Educate your school community of the impact of private parties and gatherings on the health of others and in keeping schools open
- We will reassess our guidance if incidence continues to rise or we see greater evidence of in-school transmission

Joann Hoganson, RN, MSN    Kent County Health Department liaison to schools