

Cerro Gordo County Joint Information Center

COVID-19



MEDIA RELEASE

(Mason City) – Wednesday, July 22nd, 2020

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COVID-19 Joint Information Center Update

Data Snapshot

- 39,793 total lab-confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Iowa (07/22/2020).
 - 457 total lab-confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Cerro Gordo (07/22/2020).
 - 109 total recovered in Cerro Gordo
- 808 deaths in Iowa
 - 14 deaths in Cerro Gordo
- 10,421 COVID-19 tests administered at the mobile testing unit (07/21/2020).

A status report of monitoring and testing of COVID-19 in Iowa, including county-level data, provided by the Iowa Department of Public Health can be found at <https://coronavirus.iowa.gov/#CurrentStatus>.

The Families First Coronavirus Response Act: Reminder of Sick & Child-Care Leave Laws

During these trying times it is important to understand your options. As the ability to work, and care for yourself and your family, becomes increasingly difficult the JIC would like to remind everyone that there are options available to you.

On March 18, 2020, the President signed the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) into law. The multi-billion dollar law aims to temper the financial impact of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) on states, territories, the uninsured, the unemployed, workers, and individuals who rely on food assistance, such as children and low-income seniors.

On April 1, 2020, the Department of Labor (DOL) issued new regulations to implement COVID-19-related paid sick and family leave benefits under the FFCRA, effective immediately. The regulations provide the most comprehensive guidelines to date on who qualifies for COVID-19-related leave since the passage of the FFCRA.

Two of the most significant provisions of the law are: (1) two-week emergency paid leave for COVID-19 related quarantines and sickness (and unavailability of child-care providers) and (2) Paid leave under the Emergency Family and Medical Leave Expansion Act (EFMLEA) for care of children whose school is closed or whose child care provider is unavailable for COVID-19 related reasons. These provisions became effective April 1st, 2020 and expire on December 31st, 2020. It is important to note that an employee **cannot** be required to use other forms of paid leave by an employer before using emergency sick leave.

We urge each citizen to educate themselves on the Emergency Paid Sick Leave Act and the Emergency Family and Medical Leave Expansion Act; both of which are part of the Families First Coronavirus Response Act. It is important to understand your legal rights when facing overwhelming obstacles such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Please follow this link, containing information and tools, to help you determine your eligibility under the FFCRA: <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/ffcra>

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MercyOne North Iowa Update on COVID-19 Testing at Their Facilities

Due to limited availability of test kits, MercyOne reserves in-house tests for patients being admitted to the hospital and those having surgical and other procedures. This is the best way for us to ensure our colleagues, patients and community are protected from exposure.

We are currently collecting specimens for 200-250 tests each day from people in our community who meet the testing criteria. Those tests are sent to the State Hygienic Laboratory by courier daily. While most results return within 3-4 days, it will occasionally take up to 7 days if volumes at the State of Iowa Hygienic Lab are high.

State of Iowa Hygienic Lab Testing criteria is:

- Hospitalized patient (of any age) with fever or respiratory illness for diagnosis or any hospitalized patient prior to discharge to a long term care facility or other nursing care facility
- Older adult (>60 years of age) with fever or respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, difficulty breathing) and chronic medical conditions (e.g., diabetes, heart disease, immunosuppressive medications, chronic lung disease, or chronic kidney disease)
- Person of any age with fever or respiratory illness who lives in a congregate setting (i.e., long term care facilities, dormitories, residential facilities, correctional facilities, treatment facilities)
- Health care worker, essential services personnel, first responder or critical infrastructure worker with fever or respiratory illness (e.g., health care worker, fire, EMS, law enforcement, residential facility staff, food supply and water plant operators)
- Children receiving care in and staff working in childcare homes and childcare centers with fever or respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, difficulty breathing) without alternative diagnosis
- Symptomatic or asymptomatic close contacts (defined as spending more than 15 minutes within 6 feet) of persons who test positive for COVID-19 infection using PCR viral testing. Close contact testing should not occur until at least 48 hours after the earliest exposure to COVID-19 positive persons.

People who do not meet criteria for the State of Iowa Hygienic Lab testing may still be tested with a physician order through an independent laboratory that is billed to your insurance. The turnaround time for reference labs is similar to the State of Iowa Hygienic Lab.

For more information on COVID-19 testing please dial the MercyOne Family Health Line at 641-428-7777.

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