

# Williams County Health District

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## WCHD Advisory to Williams County Residents

Williams County has been experiencing high numbers of individuals infected by COVID-19 over the past several weeks. As a result of these continued high numbers in Williams County and in surrounding communities, our local and regional medical community has been overwhelmed. Below is information provided by Community Hospitals and Wellness Centers (CHWC) about the critical situation.

- CHWC is at capacity for COVID-19 patients. They are near capacity for non-COVID-19 patients. Of the COVID-19 inpatients currently admitted, 80% are unvaccinated.
- There are four patients in the emergency department that have been admitted, but they cannot be transferred to a bed because no inpatient beds are available.
  - Of the four patients, three are COVID-19 patients.
  - There are no beds available for these patients and none of the regional hospitals have beds available.
  - The fourth patient with another medical condition is in need of services not available at CHWC. CHWC is unable to transfer them to other regional hospitals that offer these services.
- As of the evening of Tuesday, December 7th, CHWC went to out-of-county bypass for EMS. This means that CHWC can no longer accept EMS transports from outside of the county and new EMS transport patients must be taken to another hospital.
  - CHWC is still on out-of-county bypass for EMS, with the exception of STEMI (ST-Segment Elevation Myocardial Infarction, or heart attack) patients.
  - If patient levels rise, CHWC will consider Williams County EMS bypass, excluding STEMI patients.

**The Williams County Health Department strongly recommends taking the following precautions to slow the spread of COVID-19, protect loved ones, and help our medical system.**

- **Get a COVID-19 vaccine.**
  - Unvaccinated persons have a 5.8x greater risk of testing positive for COVID-19 and a 14x increased risk of dying from COVID-19 compared to fully vaccinated individuals, according to the CDC.
  - Use the following link to find local vaccination sites: <https://bit.ly/31PwDdd>
- **Wear a mask over your nose and mouth.**
  - Unvaccinated and vaccinated individuals should wear a mask in public, indoor settings while Williams County is experiencing high community transmission.
  - Masks have been proven to reduce the spread of COVID-19. Wear a mask with layers to protect yourself and others. Do your part. Masks work best when everyone wears them.
  - Learn more about the evidence for the effectiveness of masks to reduce infection: <https://bit.ly/3EGqX45>

- **Get tested before gathering with loved ones or attending an indoor event.**
  - Make sure that you are not unknowingly spreading COVID-19 to your loved ones. Before you gather, take a COVID-19 test to make sure you are not positive.
  - Free COVID-19 testing resources are available throughout the county at Williams County Public Libraries and the Montpelier Public Library. Learn more: <https://bit.ly/3ybc6Ml>
  - Other local testing sites can be found here: <https://bit.ly/3GrQGO4>
- **If you are sick, experiencing symptoms, or in contact with a positive case, stay home.**
  - Do not go to work, school, or public places if you are not feeling well. Get tested for COVID-19.
- **If you gather with others, meet outside or improve ventilation indoors.**
  - Rebalance or adjust your HVAC system to increase total airflow in crowded spaces.
  - Open windows or doors to increase airflow. Even a slightly open window can introduce new, fresh air and limit recirculating the same air.
- **Follow other precautions to reduce your risk such as handwashing and social distancing.**

Scientific evidence has shown that communities with higher rates of vaccination have lower rates of hospitalization and death from COVID-19. The Williams County Health Department understands that the choice of becoming vaccinated has been a difficult decision for many in our community. We will continue to provide vaccines during our Monday and Wednesday clinics and answer any questions people may have regarding vaccination. The Williams County Health Department cares about the health and lives of Williams County residents.

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