

Williams County Health District

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Community Talking Points

November 29, 2021

Community Hospitals and Wellness Centers (CHWC) shared the attached press release regarding the hospital's current status and capacity to care for patients. The situation is not improving. As of this morning, CHWC is experiencing increasing numbers of critical patients and is calling on the community for help.

- **Please encourage friends, colleagues, and loved ones to get the COVID-19 vaccine.** Vaccines are the most effective way to reduce severe illness, hospitalization, and death from COVID-19.
- **Wear a mask in public settings.** If you represent a business, church, or organization, we strongly urge that you consider reinstating a mask policy in your facility to limit the spread of COVID-19.
- **Avoid crowds or large gatherings, especially indoors.** Your risk for coming in contact with a positive case in Williams County is higher than it has ever been over the course of the pandemic.

Williams County's cases per capita reached a new high last Thursday. Over the last 2 weeks, we had 413 cases, or 1,125.6 per 100,000 population. Typically, after an increase in cases, there is an increase in hospitalizations over the next few weeks. The WCHD has tracked counties with similar population sizes and vaccination rates in other areas of the United States. When these areas experience high cases like we are experiencing now, their hospital systems are often overwhelmed with a high percentage of inpatient beds being used for new COVID-19 patients each week. The high numbers we are experiencing now are straining our physicians' offices and our hospital.

Increasing Williams County's vaccination rate is the best method to reduce the impact of COVID-19 in our community. Communities with high vaccination rates have a much lower risk of experiencing high case numbers and hospitalizations. We urge that people consider themselves, their families, our medical system, and reliable sources and data when making their decision about getting vaccinated.

PDF of the CHWC press release: <http://www.williamscountyhealth.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Community-Talking-Points-11242021.pdf>

We will enhance the health, safety, and well-being of our community.

The goal of releasing this information is to share the state of our hospital and our capacity to care for patients as Covid19 spreads throughout our community.

Talking points from CHWC as of 11/24/2021

- We currently have 15 admitted Covid19 inpatients
- We are utilizing negative-pressure tents inside hospital rooms to meet these volumes
- We could double up two rooms that would allow us a maximum of 17 Covid19 inpatients
- After that, we will need to start utilizing hallways
- All of our ventilators are being utilized
- We are in the process of securing two more from the regional emergency cache
- These patients are very ill and will not be discharged soon
- We are having difficult conversations with patients and family members about prognosis and end of life decisions, including DNR (Do Not Resuscitate) orders
- The larger area hospitals are also experiencing issues with staffing and available beds, limiting our ability to transfer out critically ill patients
- We are unable to transfer patients to Toledo or Ft Wayne hospitals as they are at capacity as well
- We have even reached out to Ann Arbor, Cleveland, Indianapolis, and Detroit hospitals and they are at capacity as well
- Recently it took three days to place non-Covid19 patients that come through our Emergency Department that needed services that CHWC does not provide
- For the past couple of months, our Emergency Department has had historical high volumes, with our highest number of positive Covid19 cases to date
- Our staffing resources were already strained and now even more so with the increased volumes and potential loss of staff from the CMS Covid19 vaccine mandate
- We are limiting the number of rehab inpatients admitted to Montpelier Hospital so that we can utilize our staff to care for the increasing number of Covid19 inpatients
- If our resources (staffing, physical space, Covid19 tests, and supplies) continue to be strained, we will eliminate inpatient elective surgeries and look at reducing additional services.

Please help us flatten the curve by:

- Getting Vaccinated
- Wearing masks in public settings and around people outside your household bubble
- Physical distancing
- Washing Hands
- Staying Home

We are in this together and we will do everything we can to provide comprehensive patient centered healthcare to our community. During these challenging times, we are utilizing precautionary measures to safely take care of you. Please do not hesitate in seeking care.