



To Protect, Promote and Prioritize the Health of  
Our Entire Community

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## **Thoughts on the COVID-19 Vaccine**

Nebraska, including Douglas County, can expect to see the first shipments of a vaccine to fight the pandemic in the next couple days. Without a doubt, this is good news.

The Douglas County Health Department (DCHD) is as excited as anyone about this development but wants to remind everyone of a couple key points in our continuing response to the pandemic.

The vaccine is one more tool in our efforts. Its arrival does not mean the end of the outbreak, but it will help us get back to normal. That only happens if a significant number of people get the vaccine. Once the vaccine becomes available, we will still need to practice excellent hand hygiene, wear masks, and avoid crowds until the transmission rates come down.

It is great news – some of the best we’ve had in a long time – but we need to keep using the other tools that we know work.

On Sunday, December 13, the Douglas County Health Department (DCHD) reported 400 new cases of COVID-19 that were received over the past day ending at midnight, which includes approximately 320 tests from previous days. The total number of cases in the county since the start of the pandemic in March is 46,579. For the week that ended yesterday, Douglas County saw a 28.1% positivity rate with 2,951 new cases on 10,508 tests reported. The positivity rate has dropped from 30.2% last week.

The Health Department did not receive any new certificates related to the pandemic during the past day. The number of deaths in the county connected to the pandemic remains at 399. DCHD can report that 23,491 Douglas County residents have recovered from the disease.

According to our most recent report received today, medical and surgical beds were at 74% occupancy with 391 beds available and adult ICU beds are occupied at a 71% rate with 97 beds available. There were 341 individuals hospitalized who have been diagnosed with COVID-19, with 96 of them receiving adult ICU level care. There are also 25 more persons of interest (generally waiting for test results). Forty-one individuals who were confirmed or suspected of having COVID-19 were on ventilators.

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