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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DuPage and Kane Counties: United Against COVID-19

West Suburban Region experiencing concerning increases in virus activity.

According to the Illinois Department of Public Health metrics, there is an increase in the numbers of new cases of COVID-19 which are triggering warnings from DuPage and Kane County officials. The two counties make up the West Suburban Region (Region 8) recently identified by the State of Illinois in the Restore Illinois Plan. The two counties' health departments are working together to track and reduce case counts. DuPage and Kane County leaders say they will take action that is consistent with the State of Illinois guidelines to limit the spread of disease if the metrics continue to indicate an increase of COVID-19 cases in the region.

"We need everyone to work together to help us stop the spread of the virus," said DuPage County Board Chairman Dan Cronin. "Both DuPage and Kane Counties were successful in reducing case counts through adherence to public health guidance in the spring and early summer. However, as these case counts creep up, we need to remind the public that their actions will impact the decisions health leaders make to protect our communities. We each play an important role in this fight."

The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) uses several indicators to determine if a county is experiencing stable COVID-19 activity, or if there are warning signs of increased COVID-19 risk in the county. A warning is triggered if there are 50 or more new cases per 100,000 people in a county in a one-week period. Both counties currently exceed this level and are in the warning category for this trigger. DuPage County stands at 73 new cases per 100,000 and Kane is currently at 66 cases per 100,000.

Kane County Board Chairman Chris Lauzen said, "Working with our colleagues in DuPage County, we will take the prescribed actions by IDPH to maintain the public's health, which is our mutual and top priority. This pandemic is far from over and we must maintain our vigilance and self discipline, following safety protocols to keep our residents safe from infection."

According to the state's plan, any region that sustains a positivity rate of 8% for three consecutive days or sees an increase in positivity rates along with a decrease in hospital capacity will need to implement additional community mitigation interventions. Interventions in the region will be chosen from a tiered 'menu' of options based on the severity and potential cause of the resurgence.

Region 8 currently meets the majority of state targets; however, health department leaders are concerned about the recent increases in key metrics and are proactively evaluating future actions.

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County health leaders could restrict the size of social gatherings, reduce capacity at businesses, or scale back operations in businesses that pose a higher risk of transmission, such as indoor dining, bars, salons and personal care services. Barbara Jeffers, Executive Director for Kane County Health Department stated that the science tells us that COVID-19 is highly transmissible and can be spread by those who don't know they have the disease. Our current defense for stopping the spread is to follow the current guidelines outlined by CDC and IDPH.

An increasing number of Illinois counties have experienced increases in metrics, which has caused a warning from IDPH. Region 8 leaders are working to address these concerns prior to formal State action. The warning triggers include:

- **New cases per 100,000 people.** A warning is triggered if there are 50 or more new cases per 100,000 people in the county in a one-week period. Both counties currently exceed this level and are in the warning category for this trigger. DuPage County stands at 73 new cases per 100,000 and Kane is currently at 66 cases per 100,000.
- **Weekly test positivity.** This metric indicates a warning when the 7-day test positivity rate rises above 8%. Although we are still below this threshold, we have seen increasing trends in positivity.
- **Number of deaths.** This metric indicates a warning when the number of deaths increases more than 20% for two consecutive weeks.
- **ICU availability.** If there are fewer than 20% of intensive care units available in the region, this triggers a warning.
- **Weekly emergency department visits.** This metric indicates a warning when the weekly percent of COVID-19-like-illness emergency department visits increase by more than 20% for two consecutive weeks.
- **Weekly hospital admissions.** A warning is triggered when the weekly number of hospital admissions for COVID-19-like-illness increases by more than 20% for two consecutive weeks.
- **Tests performed.** This metric is used to provide context and indicate if more testing is needed in the county.
- **Clusters.** This metric looks at the percent of COVID-19 cases associated with clusters or outbreaks and is used to understand large increase in cases.

Karen Ayala, DuPage County Health Department Executive Director, reminds all residents that in order to support our communities, businesses and schools, we can all take action. "Wear a face mask, watch your distance, and wash your hands frequently. These actions help protect your neighbors, friends and community."

Visit <http://www.dph.illinois.gov/regionmetrics?regionID=8> to view the Region 8 metrics on the IDPH website.

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