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CDPH COVID-19 Update:

Cook County Back to High COVID-19 Community Level Based on CDC Metrics

Likely to improve over the next week--but Chicagoans should be up-to-date with vaccines and boosters and mask indoors

CHICAGO – Cook County has edged back into the High COVID-19 Community Level today based on Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) national metrics. Last week—and for the first time since May—Cook County had improved from a High to Medium COVID Community level, reflecting improvements in local COVID transmission.

Though case rates have continued to improve, there has also been a slight increase in regional COVID-19 hospitalizations, which pushed the county into the High range – but just barely. The number of new COVID cases per 100,000 population in the past 7 days across Cook County was 201.7 (just over the goal of 200), and the number of new weekly hospital admissions per 100,000 population was 10.2 (just over the goal of 10.0).

The City of Chicago continues to see lower COVID case rates and hospitalizations than the county as a whole. Chicago has seen a continued decrease in weekly COVID cases (now 177 per 100,000 population) and continued low rates of COVID hospitalization (3.5 per 100,000 population). Less than 4% of hospital beds across all of Chicago’s hospitals are currently occupied by patients with COVID-19.

Other Chicago indicators, including Emergency Department encounters and wastewater monitoring, also continue to remain stable. While these and other indicators are reassuring, COVID-19 continues to spread in the community, with many infections due to the newer omicron subvariants BA.4/BA.5.

"I know everyone wants COVID to be over," said CDPH Commissioner Allison Arwady, M.D. "Unfortunately, we continue to see the COVID virus itself mutate quickly, with new, more contagious subvariants emerging every few weeks. The good news is that Chicago continues to see declining case rates and hospitalizations and that vaccines and boosters continue to protect against severe illness."

"We do expect that Cook County will drop back to Medium level again next week, but this is a good reminder to make sure that you and everyone you love is up to date with vaccines—

including boosters,” added Dr. Arwady. “And please, wear your mask—especially if you are in any crowded, indoor spaces. Take advantage of our summer weather and move higher-risk gatherings out of doors if you can, where ventilation is better and the risk of COVID transmission is lower.”

The CDC determines COVID-19 Community Levels as Low, Medium, or High, based on the number of new local COVID-19 cases, regional COVID-19 hospital admissions, and COVID-19 hospital capacity in the prior week. They were developed to help communities decide what prevention steps to take based on the latest local COVID-19 data. Travelers should review CDPH’s travel guidance and check the [CDC map](#) to know whether the areas they are visiting are Low, Medium, or High risk for COVID-19 and take proper precautions. The CDC recently announced that international travelers to the U.S. are no longer required to show proof of a negative COVID-19 viral test before boarding their flight to the U.S.

When the CDC updates its COVID-19 Community Levels national map each week, the City of Chicago and suburban Cook County data are combined into one weekly case metric for Cook County. Hospitalization data, in contrast, reflect a burden on the whole federally defined Health Service Area, which includes hospitals in Cook, Lake, DuPage, and McHenry counties. CDPH continues to track and report COVID-19 hospital burden specifically for Chicago hospitals every day on its dashboard and uses this local hospital data to make further mitigation decisions. Visit chi.gov/coviddash for the Chicago COVID-19 daily data dashboard.

Based on the latest data from CDC, Cook County levels are as follows.

| Metrics | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| | New Cases (Per 100,000 people in last 7 days) <i>GOAL is <200</i> | New COVID-19 Hospital Admissions (Per 100,000 people in last 7 days) <i>GOAL is <10</i> | Proportion of staffed inpatient beds occupied by COVID-19 patients (7 day average) <i>GOAL is <10%</i> |
| City of Chicago | 177 | 3.5 | 3.7% |
| Cook County (including City of Chicago) | 201.7 | 10.2 | 3.5% |

Cook County metrics are calculated by the CDC and posted on the CDC Community Levels website (data as of 6/23/2022).

COVID-19 Community Levels in the U.S. by County

Nationwide, there has been a slight increase in the proportion of U.S. counties at either the Medium or High Level, from 42 percent last week to just over 43 percent this week. The bulk of communities at either Medium or High Levels has shifted from the Northeast, New England, and Upper Midwest, to the Western U.S., and Florida (where nearly every part of the state is at the Medium or High COVID-19 Level).

A total of 20 of Illinois' 102 counties are now at a High Level, down from 25 last week. Another 40 Illinois counties are at Medium COVID-19 Level. DuPage and Lake counties have joined Cook County in the move from Medium to High Level from last week.

| | Community Level | Number of Counties Nationally | Percent of Counties | % Change from Prior Week |
|--|------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| | High | 392 (329 last week) | 12% | 2.0% |
| | Medium | 997 (946 last week) | 31% | 1.6% |
| | Low | 1,832 (1,946 last week) | 57% | -3.5% |

For additional COVID-19 news, see CDPH's weekly update or visit [Chicago.gov/COVID](https://www.chicago.gov/COVID).

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