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**MAYOR LIGHTFOOT AND CDPH COMMISSIONER DR. ARWADY SOUND THE  
ALARM ON SECOND WAVE OF COVID-19**

Cases, positivity rate and hospitalizations all on the rise over the past two weeks; City considering measures to reverse the increase, including renewed restrictions on businesses

**CHICAGO** – Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot today joined Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) Commissioner Allison Arwady, M.D., to sound the alarm on the worrying trends across COVID-19 health metrics, including a significant rise in cases, positivity rate and hospitalizations. Over the past two weeks, cases have risen by more than 50%, to over 500 per day. This is the most cases per day seen in Chicago since late May, the tail-end of the pandemic's first wave, and is coinciding with a worrying increase in hospitalizations, which are also up 25% for non-ICU COVID patients and suspected cases since September 22. To combat this second wave of COVID-19, Mayor Lightfoot is calling on all residents to wear masks and strictly limit social gatherings, even small ones. In a gathering of only 10 people, there is a 14% chance that someone is currently infected with COVID-19. To further fight the spread of COVID-19, the City is considering additional measures in the coming days, including bringing back restrictions on businesses.

“The data is clear - we are now in a second surge of COVID-19 and I am extremely concerned,” said Mayor Lightfoot. “Now is the time to double down on what we know works and come together as a city to flatten the curve once again. Everyone must do their part to keep themselves and others safe and help us overcome this deadly disease.”

Over the last two weeks in particular, Chicago has seen an alarming increase across COVID-19 health metrics. While this increase has coincided with an increase in testing, with close to 11,000 tests now completed each day, the test positivity rate has also increased more than a percentage point to 5.2%. This indicates that the increase in testing does not fully explain the rise in cases. Furthermore, hospitalizations, a measure of severe outcomes which often lags behind an increase in cases, are up to 313 per day citywide. Deaths, too, usually lag an increase in cases



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and hospitalizations, so City officials are expressing great concern over the possibility of a further increase. Over 3,000 Chicagoans have died from COVID-19.

“I’m deeply concerned about these trends and worried that we’ve got some COVID fatigue setting in where people are not following the public health guidance as they should. This virus doesn’t care who you are, it’s just looking to spread, and if we give it the opportunity to do so it will,” said Dr. Arwady. “Most troubling is the fact that COVID-19 continues to have a disproportionate impact on Black and Latinx individuals, and those with under-lying medical conditions. But we’re seeing a rise in cases across the city and across all races and ethnicities, so we all need to re-dedicate ourselves to combatting this epidemic.”

Mayor Lightfoot and Dr. Arwady are calling on all residents to recognize the seriousness of this second wave of COVID-19 and take the necessary personal steps to stem the tide. Specifically, all residents need to wear masks or face coverings anytime they are in a public space or unable to maintain six feet of social distancing. Furthermore, residents should avoid social gatherings, even small get-togethers. The more individuals that are a part of your “bubble”, the greater the risk of COVID-19 transmission. In a gathering of ten people, there’s a 14% chance one person in that group has COVID-19. That means one out of every seven gatherings of ten people has COVID-19 present. This likelihood of someone having COVID-19 increases as gathering sizes grow - there is a 50% chance that someone in a gathering of 50 people has COVID-19. The majority of COVID-19 cases in Chicago are spread between people that know each other, so the best way to stem the tide is to avoid social gatherings and keep your bubble small.

To further fight the spread of COVID-19 and save lives, the City is prepared to take drastic but necessary steps in the coming days. This may include a rollback of COVID-19 reopening regulations for businesses, including potentially restricting capacity and limiting total gathering size and/or returning to Phase Three of the reopening framework.

“Chicago is at a critical moment in the ongoing fight against COVID-19,” said Dr. Nancy Glick of Sinai Health System's Infectious Disease Division. “We have learned a great deal about this virus since the first surge, including what works to stop the spread. It is more important than ever to commit to those strategies - wearing a mask, limiting social gatherings and ultimately saving lives.”

The significant increase of COVID-19 in Chicago corresponds with a second wave of the virus throughout the entire Chicagoland region, across Illinois, in other Midwestern states and throughout the country. As a reminder, the City’s Emergency Travel Order currently covers 26 states and territories, including Wisconsin and



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Indiana. Chicagoans are urged not to travel to these states and territories, and if they do they are required to quarantine for 14 days upon their return, unless they are an essential worker traveling for business. For Wisconsin and Indiana, the Order applies to individuals coming from Wisconsin or Indiana to Chicago for non-work purposes and Chicago residents returning from Wisconsin or Indiana, unless they are deemed an essential worker. To learn more, visit [chicago.gov/coronavirus](https://chicago.gov/coronavirus).

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