



## ASHLAND COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

### For Immediate Release July 17, 2020 NEWS RELEASE

The following are the current COVID-19 numbers for Ashland County.

There have been a total of 99 positive COVID-19 cases; of which, 96 are confirmed positives and 3 are probable cases. Of the 99, there are 34 active cases, 61 recovered individuals and 4 deaths. The health department is currently investigating a 5<sup>th</sup> death in association with COVID-19. In addition, there is one individual in intensive care at the local hospital. There are also 248 Ashland County residents currently being monitored by a public health nurse for COVID-19 symptoms as a result of their exposure to the virus.

“With regards to the recent COVID-19 deaths, we are a small community and there may be public awareness of someone’s passing before the health department releases the information,” said Heather Reffett, Ashland County’s Health Commissioner. “We believe that it is very important to not report that a death is COVID related until the cause of death is listed on the official record which is completed by a medical physician. It can be very difficult for family members to hear inaccurate information. As public health professionals, we are very aware of the sensitivities surrounding the release of public health data and the impact that numbers have on a community. We want to be thoughtful as well as respectful to the family. We continue to hold those who have lost a family member to COVID-19 in our thoughts and prayers.”

### **PUBLIC HEALTH WARNING**

At this time, the ACHD is investigating 5 outbreaks within the County, each at various levels of concern.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Ashland County death is related to an outbreak associated with the American Legion in Jeromesville. At this time, the ACHD estimates that approximately 55 individuals have been impacted by this outbreak. Some of these are members of the organization while others are related to a member who was positive and worked while shedding the virus. The health department asks that members of the Legion and residents of Jeromesville stay highly vigilant in monitoring their health and contact their doctor immediately if they feel ill. “If you believe that you have been exposed to a positive case, self-quarantine immediately and contact the health department”, requested Shirley Bixby, Director of Nursing. “Unfortunately, we have already seen 1 death and 3 hospitalizations related to this outbreak” Mayor Randy Spade of Jeromesville said that, “At a time when those who are most vulnerable in our community are threatened, we must do whatever we can protect them. That being said, I encourage everyone to observe the recommended measures, contact your doctor if you exhibit any symptoms, and

be safe. We continue to hold those members of our community who have been affected by the virus and their families up in prayer.”

The 4<sup>th</sup> Ashland County death is related to the outbreak that occurred at the McMullen Assisted Care facility in Loudonville. In total, there were 50 individuals affected by this outbreak; 15 employees, 16 patients, and 19 contacts. At this time, the health department and other partners are working hard to support the facility in adopting effective policies and procedures to safely reopen. There remain 7 individuals being monitored by public health nurses.