



ASHLAND COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

**For Immediate Release
July 7, 2020**

NEWS RELEASE

The Ashland County Health Department (ACHD) is unfortunately reporting our second death attributed to COVID-19. The individual was previously a resident of McMullen Assisted Care and associated with the outbreak that occurred at the facility.

“While we are seeing an increase in all of our numbers, having a community member pass away will never just be a statistic,” said Heather Reffett, Ashland County’s Health Commissioner. “The health department extends our heartfelt sympathies to the family of this individual”.

At this time, Ashland County has 70 confirmed positive COVID-19 cases and 4 probable cases. Of this group, there are 27 active cases in our community. There have been 13 hospitalizations; however, there are currently 0 Ashland residents in the hospital for COVID-19 related illness at this time. Currently, the health department is actively monitoring 137 who have been exposed to the virus.

Contact tracing efforts conducted by public health nurses finds that the recent increases are due to residents participating in large public gatherings, traveling to high risk areas of the country, and not self-quarantining when they have symptoms. While the state still has limitations on social gathering group sizes, there have been provisions made to allow some venues, such as with sporting events. It is important that even while attending a sanctioned event that you vigilantly observe social distancing and the proper wearing of a face mask. Equally important is that if residents plan to travel out of the state that they take extra precautions. It is even more important that people who are sick, with any illness, to stay at home.

Shirley Bixby, Nursing Director shares that “I am concerned about the sharp increase in COVID-19 cases in our community. It is deeply distressing to hear that another one of our county residents was a victim of this disease. I sincerely hope that all residents think before attending large social gatherings. The majority of the calls that we get every day are concerning potential exposures. We hope that all citizens develop healthy habits to allow for safe and enjoyable social interaction. You can have fun, just stand a little further apart.”

As of July 6, the state issued a new Order which extended social distancing requirements and other established sector specific Orders indefinitely. Due to the continued state of emergency, the ACHD encourages the following:

- If you own or manage a business, please stay familiar with existing State Orders. If you need consultation or technical assistance, please contact the health department at 419-282-4231.
- If you observe a business establishment not adhering to State Orders, please contact the health department at 419-282-4231.
- If you are concerned with your well-being, the most effective method to prevent the spread of the virus is the proper use of a face mask.
- If you feel ill and are concerned that you may have COVID-19 symptoms, please contact your doctor and request to be tested. If you do not have a doctor, please contact the health department at 419-282-4231.

Currently, ACHD plans to continue press releases on a weekly basis, either Thursday or Friday.