



ASHLAND COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

**For Immediate Release**  
**DATE: September 11, 2020**

**NEWS RELEASE**

The Ashland County Health Department (ACHD) provides that, as of today, the COVID-19 local data for Ashland County is such: 192 positive cases. Of these cases, 10 are active, 177 are recovered and there have been 5 deaths. There is one hospitalization of an Ashland County resident in our local hospital. The health department is currently monitoring 95 individuals due to their exposure to the virus. For the active cases, 1 individual is asymptomatic, 8 are experiencing mild symptoms and 1 has severe symptoms (the hospitalization).

**CODE ORANGE:**

As many of you are aware, the state designated Ashland County as a Level 2 Orange category yesterday on September 10<sup>th</sup>. An Orange level designation indicates increased exposure and spread. “As a representative of the Ashland County Health Department, I state that I do not agree that our county is at an Orange level of concern,” stated Heather Reffett, the Health Commissioner. “While we may be experiencing an increase over the small numbers that we experienced the past few weeks, these current numbers are still minimal. Currently, we have 10 active cases in the county.”

Data explanation – the state has provided that Ashland County has met two of its alert indicators which elevates the County from Yellow to Orange. In total, the Ohio Department of Health has 10 indicators with seven being key indicators. The state believes that Ashland has met Indicator #2 and Indicator #3. For clarification, ACHD manages its local data and is more informed than the state on local numbers. The state has a large workload with having to manage the data for all 88 counties, ACHD is able to focus solely on Ashland County. ACHD does not agree that it meets Indicator #2. Indicator #2 would require Ashland to have had an increasing trend for at least 5 consecutive days within the last two weeks. This did not occur.

Ashland County reports positive cases per day for the 2 week timeframe used by the state, August 23<sup>rd</sup> until September 5<sup>th</sup>:

8/23	0
8/24	0
8/25	1
8/26	0
8/27	0
8/28	0
8/29	5
8/30	0

8/31	2
9/01	4
9/02	1
9/03	2
9/04	1
9/05	0

At no time during these past two weeks were cases increasing each day for five consecutive days.

With regards to Indicator #3, this indicator is considered met if 50% or more of the county’s positive cases are from the community versus being from a congregate living facility. Due to the high-quality work of our local long-term care facilities, our county will almost always meet this measure. Since the beginning of COVID-19, the vast majority of our cases have been from the community. Our local nursing homes have worked closely with the ACHD, the state, UH Samaritan and each other to ensure that they put in place very stringent precautions to protect their patients and staff. We have been fortunate in Ashland, due to their hard work, that we have had very minimal spread within these facilities. Since, there is minimal spread within the nursing homes, Ashland County’s cases are almost always from community spread.

“While we do not agree with the Ohio Department of Health that Ashland County is experiencing Orange level concern, we do greatly appreciate the state and ODH for all of the support that they have provided to our health department. In the past few months, not only has the state provided us with direct funding to expand our capacity to respond to COVID-19 but they have provided us with supplies and unlimited technical assistance, education and detailed guidance materials that are priceless in value. We are extremely grateful for their continued efforts to keep our county and our state safe,” shared the Health Commissioner.

While Ashland County may not truly be in the Orange, the incoming data on current numbers from this week are absolutely concerning to local public health officials. Early data does indicate that the return to school has evidenced an increase in positive cases within Ashland County. “We believe that our schools have done everything right, they have taken many necessary precautions to keep students and staff safe,” reports Director of Nursing, Shirley Bixby. “Still, it is up to the individuals now to do the right thing. It is essential that everyone follow the face covering requirements by either wearing a mask, shield or even a scarf or bandana and that they observe good safety measures while they are moving about in the community. There is only so much that organizations and facilities can do before it simply boils down to individual behavior.”

“If residents are concerned with seeing our county highlighted in Orange, imagine the response if we become Red or Purple. As Ashland citizens, we must do our part to evidence change in these new numbers. Take personal ownership of your role in preventing the spread of the virus and use your positive influence with friends, family and neighbors,” provided Sheila Pryor, the public health emergency manager for Ashland County Health Department. “We have definitely seen increasing amounts of improperly planned large group gatherings that are contributing to these growing numbers. If you are planning an event, please reach out to the health department and we can advise on safety measures.”

###