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Memo from Polk County Health Department

COVID-19 Cases on the Rise in Central Iowa Increased Concern for Long Term Care Residents

June 30, 2020

Our country has seen an increase in COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations over the past several weeks. The United States has experienced the highest case counts of the pandemic, over 40,000 cases in the past two days. Central Iowa is now following the same trend. Over the past seven days, our positive COVID-19 cases are on the rise again. Since the beginning of June, Polk County has been averaging around 50-55 cases a day. The seven-day trend has shown an increase of 20% of new cases reported in central Iowa. We are seeing community spread of COVID-19 as our community has re-opened.

The information presented above is very alarming for our populations who are at an increased risk for severe illness. These populations include older adults and individuals with underlying health concerns. Polk County data shows a decrease of cases and hospitalizations for individuals living in long term care settings as of right now. However, as our cases keep increasing in Polk County, this puts individuals living in long term care and their health at incredible risk. We are very concerned that without taking proper precautions our cases, hospitalizations and deaths in long term care settings will increase.

We are asking long term care centers and the community to continue taking the precautions necessary to keep our older adults safe. Please continue to practice the following migration strategies:

- Visitation generally prohibited, except for compassionate care situations.
- Restricted entry of non-essential healthcare personnel.
- Communal dining limited (for COVID-19 negative or asymptomatic residents only), but residents may eat in the same room with social distancing (limited number of people at tables and spaced by at least 6 feet).
- Non-medically necessary trips outside the building should be avoided.

Please look to the [Nursing Home Reopening Recommendations for State and Local Officials](#) document for additional guidance. If you have additional concerns and questions, please contact the Polk County Health Department's Communicable Disease Team at (515) 286-3890.

For more information about the COVID-19 in Polk County, please Polk County Health Department's website at www.polkcountyiowa.gov/health.