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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Public Health Advisory System for COVID-19

NORWALK, Ohio— On July 2, 2020, Ohio Governor Mike DeWine announced a new Public Health Advisory System for COVID-19. The 4 level system (yellow, orange, red, purple) provides a clear, color-coded approach to inform Ohioans about their current risk associated with COVID-19 and provides evidence-based recommendations and actions that can be taken to protect themselves and their communities based on the level of risk. The alert levels are as followed:

- Alert Level 1 Public Emergency (Yellow): Baseline level. County has met zero or one indicator. Active exposure and spread. Follow all health orders.
- Alert Level 2 Public Emergency (Orange): County has met two or three indicators. Increased exposure and spread. Exercise high degree of caution. Follow all current health orders.
- Alert Level 3 Public Emergency (Red): County has met four or five indicators. Very high exposure and spread. Limit Activities as much as possible. Follow all current health orders.
- Alert Level 4 Public Emergency (Purple): County has met six or seven indicators. Severe exposure and spread. Only leave home for supplies and services. Follow all current health orders.

A county's alert level is determined by the following seven data indicators:

- New Cases Per Capita
- Sustained Increase in New Cases
- Proportion of Cases that Are Not Congregate Cases
- Sustained Increase in Emergency Room Visits
- Sustained Increase in Outpatient Visits
- Sustained Increase in New COVID-19 Hospital Admissions
- Intensive Care Unit (ICU) Bed Occupancy



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Huron County is currently at level 3 (red). This means Huron County is considered “very high” for COVID-19 exposure and spread and because of this, it is crucial that residents limit activities as much as possible and follow all current health orders. Huron County is flagged red as 5 of the 7 indicators are triggered. The five triggered indicators include:

- New Cases Per Capita
- Increase in New Cases
- Proportion of Cases that Are Not Congregate Cases
- Increase in Emergency Room Visits
- Increase in Outpatient Visits

As of June 30, 2020, Huron County had reported more than 120 cases within 14 days, which means the county exceeds the "high incidence" category for COVID-19 as defined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Beginning on June 9, Huron County had an average of 2 cases per day and reached 7 cases per day by June 23. The community is also experiencing early signs that more people are seeking medical care for COVID-19 symptoms. More people are also visiting their doctors and being diagnosed with COVID-19. Between June 9 and June 23, those doctor visits increased from 4 to 9 visits per day. Similarly, more residents are also going to the emergency department for COVID-like symptoms. Additionally, Huron County has multiple workplace outbreaks. Residents should be aware that Huron County is at this level due to meeting five of the seven indicators of the Ohio Public Health Advisory System, and is not solely a result of workplace outbreaks occurring within the County.

As seen in other areas of the United States experiencing community spread, additional cases are expected to rise in Huron County and additional outbreaks are expected to occur. With the recent holiday and the large amount of community events and gatherings that continued to take place despite recommendations to delay or cancel, it is expected that an additional increase in cases will be a result of those celebrations. High-risk individuals (roughly 60% of Ohio's population) are at an increased risk of severe illness and should take every precaution to guard against contracting COVID-19. If you are experiencing any COVID-19 symptoms it is crucial that you stay home except to receive medical care. Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus and may include fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, and diarrhea.

“We understand this is a crisis for our community and the country. The red designation established by the State for our county, indicates the level of risk each resident shares” said HCPH Health Commissioner, Timothy Hollinger. “Improvement can only occur if the residents of each community voluntarily choose to take responsible steps. We acknowledge that the population has the ability to make the situation worse or better. The preventative measures needed are the same measures we have urged since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. These precautions we are asking you to take revolve around self-appraisal, and responsible actions for your own health and the health of your friends and neighbors.”

If Huron County residents follow the recommendations and orders of Governor Mike DeWine and the Ohio Department of Health which includes mandating masks while in public effective July 8, 2020 at 6:00 PM, banning mass gatherings, and limiting unnecessary public exposures, we can limit the community's exposure to this disease and can make a tremendous impact on reducing the number of those infected and potential unnecessary deaths.

As always, residents should continue to follow all COVID-19 preventative measures such as:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve when coughing or sneezing.
- Wear a mask while in public.
- Avoid contact with sick people.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces
- And most importantly, stay home when you are sick.

HCPH will continue to share information as it becomes available on

www.huroncohealth.com/coronavirus2019.

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