



News Release

Unified Government of Wyandotte County
701 N. 7th Street, Room 620
Kansas City, Kansas 66101

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 6, 2021

Unified Government Issues Mask Mandate for Kansas City, Kansas and Other Portions of Wyandotte County

On Thursday evening, August 5, the Unified Government Commission voted to enact a mask order for Kansas City, Kansas and the unincorporated area of Loring in Wyandotte County. The mask order was signed into effect by the Wyandotte County Clerk at approximately 2 pm today and is now in effect through 11:59 pm on September 16, 2021.

The order excludes public and private schools and also excludes the cities of Bonner Springs and Edwardsville, Kansas. UG Commissioners opted to leave the decision of mask requirements to school boards and to Bonner Springs and Edwardsville elected officials, respectively.

Unified Government Commission Meeting Update

At a meeting of the Unified Government Board of Commissioners last night, the Unified Government Public Health Department (UGPHD) leadership as well as Dr. Steve Stites, Chief Medical Officer with the University of Kansas Health System, presented current COVID-19 data to the UG Commission.

Some statistics about the current status of COVID-19 in Wyandotte County include:

- The rolling 7-day average of cases per day is up to 77 new cases per day – the highest rate since late January 2021, and nine times higher than the average cases per day just two months ago.
- The positivity rate (a 7-day rolling average of positive test percentages) has climbed to 32 percent, as high as it was in mid-January 2021, and more than four times higher than the positivity rate in May 2021.
- Two-thirds of current positive cases in Wyandotte County are among children and young adults under 40 years of age (*see chart “Cases in Past 14 Days by Age Group” in Addendum section*)
- The vast majority of hospitalized cases of COVID-19 are in people who have not been vaccinated

UGPHD leaders and Dr. Stites said they are especially concerned about the presence of the Delta Variant in Wyandotte County and the metro area because it is much more transmissible than prior types of COVID. Because of low vaccination rates in Wyandotte County, the Delta Variant is causing significant spread of COVID-19 throughout the community. UGPHD leaders noted that Wyandotte County and the Kansas City area are experiencing “uncontrolled community spread” (deemed “HIGH” spread by the CDC).

“Given the rapid surge of new COVID-19 cases in Wyandotte County, we had a tremendous sense of urgency to recommend that the Commission take action,” said Dr. Allen Greiner, Chief Medical Officer for the Unified Government Public Health Department. “The vast majority of our new cases are among unvaccinated people, and we know that most of these cases are the Delta variant, which spreads more easily than other types of COVID. The best way to protect everyone in our community is for everyone to wear a mask in public places and for those who are eligible, to get vaccinated as soon as possible.”

What is Covered by the Mask Order

Individuals age five and older must wear masks over the nose and mouth when:

- Inside any public space including businesses and places of worship;
- Obtaining services from the healthcare sector in settings including, but not limited to, a hospital, pharmacy, medical clinic, laboratory, physician or dental office, vaccination site, COVID-19 testing site, veterinary clinic, or blood bank (unless otherwise directed by an employee or healthcare provider);
- Waiting for or riding on public transportation or while in a taxi, private car service, or ride-sharing vehicle; and

All businesses or organizations in Wyandotte County must require all employees, customers, visitors, members, or members of the public to wear a mask or other face covering when:

- Employees are working in any space visited by customers or members of the public, regardless of whether anyone from the public is present at the time; or
- Employees are working in an indoor space; or
- Employees are working in any space where food is prepared or packaged for sale or distribution to others; or
- In any indoor space where members

“We have thousands of children under the age of 12 in Wyandotte County who can’t get vaccinated yet,” said Juliann Van Liew, Director of the Unified Government Public Health Department. “Those children will be back in schools within a few weeks. The best way we, as a community, can protect them is to wear masks and for everyone around them who is eligible to get vaccinated. The Delta variant is resulting in more COVID cases among children than previous strains. We need to do everything possible to protect our kids and those who are most vulnerable to infection. Wearing a mask is the simplest and quickest way for us to make a difference in current COVID-19 spread.”

Vaccinations and Incentives Still Available!

The UGPHD continues to offer free COVID-19 vaccines for people who live in Wyandotte County age 12 and older, at the former Kmart site at 7836 State Avenue. Hours for COVID-19 vaccinations and testing, and childhood immunizations are as follows (NOTE: All of these services are free of charge!):

- COVID Testing: Monday – Friday 9 am – 3 pm
- COVID Vaccines: Wednesday – Friday 10 am – 6 pm
- Childhood Immunizations: Wednesdays in August, 12 pm – 6 pm

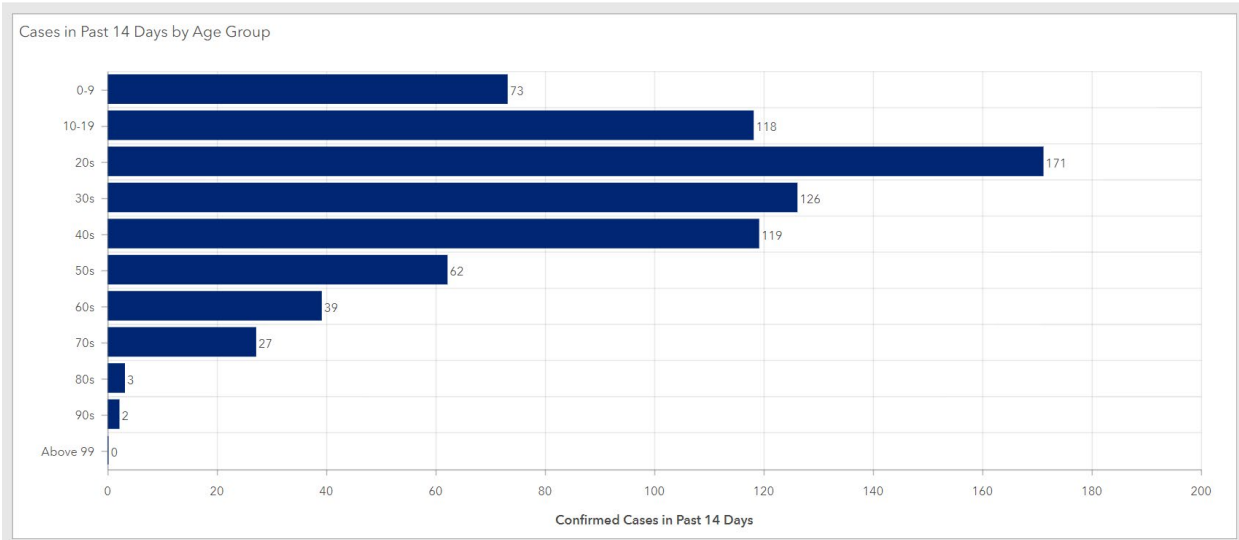
And now, the UGPHD offers incentives for those getting vaccinated! For more information on where to get vaccinated in Wyandotte County, visit WycovVaccines.org or call 3-1-1. To learn more about upcoming UGPHD mobile vaccination events visit their Facebook page at facebook.com/UGHealthDept

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Community Information and Questions:

Vaccine information: Go to WycovVaccines.org or call 3-1-1 (913-573-5311)
Other COVID-19 updates: Go to wycokck.org/COVID-19

Wyandotte County COVID-19 Cases in the Past 14 Days by Age Group (updated 8/4/2021)



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