

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Media Contact:**

Barbara Mitchell, Public Information Officer

[barbara.mitchell@jocogov.org](mailto:barbara.mitchell@jocogov.org)

Jennifer Dunlay, Risk Communicator

[jennifer.dunlay@jocogov.org](mailto:jennifer.dunlay@jocogov.org)

Media Line: (913) 477-8436

**Johnson County continues to see a high number of cases**

*Community must take steps to prevent further spread of the virus*

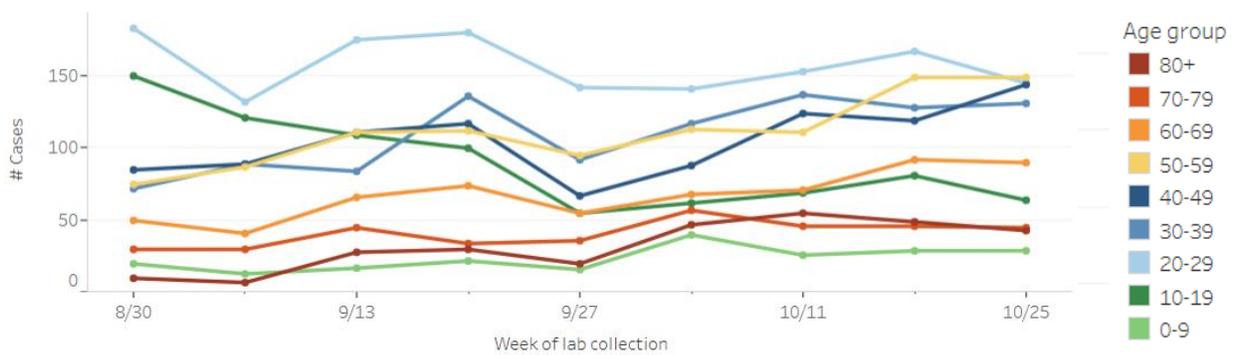
**(JOHNSON COUNTY, KANSAS – November 3, 2020)** Johnson County Department of Health and Environment (JCDHE) continues to report an exponential increase in the number of new COVID-19 cases, indicating high community spread. Last week, JCDHE reported 1,251 cases, a 75% increase from the preceding week.

The increase in new cases is coming from people in the 20-60 years old range, who are gathering in large groups in places such as crowded restaurants or bars, as well as people who are attending small and large social gatherings, such as football watch parties, birthday parties, camps, weddings and church events.

There are also significant household transmissions occurring representing approximately 20% of new infections since September 1.

Due to the data JCDHE is seeing, the recommended phase for school gating criteria has been updated to the Red Zone. It's important to note the spike in cases is not being driven by schools, but activity within the community.

# of cases by age group



The blue trend lines and yellow trend line reflects the ages (20-59) where virus transmission is highest.

“We are urging residents – including parents of children in school – to help break the transmission cycle of the virus and to stay home if you have been in contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19,” said Dr. Sanmi Areola, director of public health for JCDHE.

High community spread impacts everyone. The JCDHE warns it especially places our schools and residents of long-term care facilities at higher risks. While school districts may decide not to change to more restrictive learning mode, JCDHE is stressing the need for heightened vigilance in our school districts. The risks of introduction of the virus to schools and of outbreaks is higher with this level of community spread.

Increased community spread is starting to impact the number of hospital beds available for people who are very ill, and staffing, if healthcare workers become ill. Rising infections have also stretched the capacity of public health to conduct case investigations in a timely manner.

Dr. Sanmi Areola, JCDHE director, states “Infections are growing at an alarming rate. This is not the time to attend social functions. This is the time to make good choices and be mindful of the impact on our friends, family and fellow community members.”

It is more important than ever to break the transmission cycle in Johnson County by:

- Not attending small or large social functions for the time being.
- Wearing masks appropriately and consistently in public places.
- Physically distancing.
- Washing hands frequently.
- Staying home when sick.

Upcoming holidays combined with colder temperatures forcing people indoors, are major cause for concern with the surge in cases.

For more information, including additional data about COVID-19 in Johnson County, visit [jocogov.org./coronavirus](http://jocogov.org./coronavirus).

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