

August 31, 2020

Dear Iowa State Community,

I am writing to share an update on Iowa State University's COVID-19 test results and additional actions we are taking to prioritize health and safety and mitigate the spread of infection.

Test results. During the second week of the semester (Aug. 24-30) 1,749 students, faculty, and staff were tested on-campus with 503 positive cases for a positivity percentage of 28.8%. This is an increase from week one of the semester (Aug. 17-23) when 957 students, faculty, and staff were tested with a total of 130 positive cases for a positivity percentage of 13.6%. The cumulative positivity percentage for on-campus testing since Aug. 1 is 18.5%.

Targeted testing strategy. The increase in cases and the positivity percentage is not unexpected due to our targeted testing strategy. The individuals being tested are symptomatic or have potentially been exposed to someone with COVID-19, so they are more likely to test positive. The figures also include student-athletes who may not be symptomatic or been exposed, but are required to be tested by the NCAA. Dr. Alex Ramirez, professor of veterinary diagnostic and preventive medicine, is serving as a faculty advisor to our Public Health Team. He shared this explanation of the numbers and the level of risk during this morning's [faculty and staff town hall](#):

“While the percentage of positive cases among those tested is relatively high, the actual number of positives is small when considering the entire campus population. Because the university is taking a targeted approach to testing, it is minimizing the risk to others.”

Iowa State now has a [COVID-19 Public Health Data](#) website that is being updated weekly with information about test results and isolation and quarantine cases and capacity.

Definition of positivity percentage. It is important to note the positivity percentage is not the percent of positive cases among the entire campus population. It is the percent of positive cases among the population of tested individuals.

Where exposure is occurring. Through self-reports and contact tracing, we see the majority of exposure is occurring off campus. Mitigation strategies being used in classrooms or laboratories are showing to be effective.

Unfortunately, we are now seeing the impacts of the large parties and gatherings that occurred the weekend before classes started. For that reason, we enacted the new [student social gathering policy](#). We also appreciate the Governor's decision to close bars in Ames and Story County. In

addition, we are increasing our on-campus testing capacity and enhancing the contact tracing process to quickly identify and isolate cases.

These actions should flatten the curve of infection when combined with the vigilant practice of the [Cyclones Care behaviors](#) both on- and off-campus, at restaurants, while shopping, and in social situations. We must remember we're not just protecting ourselves, but our friends and neighbors as well.

Public health and science-based decision making. As we progress through the fall semester, our health and safety decisions remain rooted in the best public health and science-based guidance available, and we will continue to evaluate and refine our strategies and change course if necessary.

More testing capacity and contact tracing. Thielen Student Health Center is establishing a second on-campus testing site, at Johnny's in Hilton Coliseum. We are also more than doubling the number of contact tracers and case managers to help quickly identify and isolate positive cases.

Also, a Test Iowa Clinic site opened today in Ames, in partnership with Mary Greeley Medical Center. The drive-through test clinic is located south of campus at the ISU Research Park, 2503 South Loop Drive. Call 800-866-3492 to schedule an appointment. More information is available at TestIowa.com.

Self-report results — It's required. A reminder that students, faculty, and staff are required to self-report if they test positive for COVID-19 at a facility other than Thielen Student Health Center. This is critical. Contacting your instructors or supervisors is not enough. Complete [the self-reporting form](#). Health information reported to Thielen Student Health Center is not shared; you don't need to fear disciplinary action for doing the responsible thing to report your case.

Thank you for your cooperation and care in helping to flatten the curve and support our campus and community.

Wendy Wintersteen
President