

December 4th, 2020

Four Corner's Health Department reported the Risk Dial has risen slightly, up to 3.31, due to the high volume the previous two weeks. The Risk Dial remains in red. Community clusters/spread and struggles with contact tracing continue to be red. Hospital capacity and testing availability have improved slightly but remain between orange and red. The Trajectory also remains between orange and red; although, they did report that positive weekly cases, while still too high, have dropped. Medical equipment and PPE availability are at yellow. The Positivity Rate is lower at 17.66%, but the three week rolling average still classifies the rate in red. If numbers continue to drop, we could see a change in the Risk Dial, but Four Corner's cautions that we will need to see how the Thanksgiving holiday impacts numbers next week. Butler County has had a rough week with 82 new cases. Four Corner's is preparing for the delivery of vaccines later this month; they are working on the details for distribution.

As of 5:00 P.M. on Thursday, Dec. 3rd, new DHMs from the governor were passed based on CDC changes in COVID guidelines. These changes are in regards to quarantine and testing guidelines. The new DHMs can be viewed at <https://fourcorners.ne.gov/> The following is a quick summary:

*Tests must be PCR or Antigen tests-which is what Test Nebraska and clinics use. Note that the Rapid Tests are known to be less accurate if individuals test while not showing symptoms.

*For a positive test or high-risk exposure, people will need to quarantine for 10 days from exposure. Then, they may return, but must wear masks and check symptoms twice a day for the remaining 4 days. (assuming they do not have symptoms at that point)

*If someone is quarantining for an exposure and symptoms develop, they will need to quarantine for 10 days from symptoms.

*If a person in quarantine chooses to get tested on or after the 5th day of exposure and the test is negative, they may return after day 7 and monitor symptoms for the remainder of the 14 days. **The family must provide documentation of the negative test result, which is emailed to them.** With no documentation, the school will continue to follow Four Corner's recommendations. **If the test comes back positive, they will need to quarantine for 10 days from the positive test.

The general rationale behind these changes is two-fold: it continues to keep people safe as the experts feel that this time frame covers the time period when most people test positive and that it makes the quarantine more likely to be followed.

There have also been modifications/clarifications to the athletic policies. Students actively competing in an event do not need to wear a mask and an exposure from that time would result in self-monitoring, but not quarantine. However, athletes/competitors need to wear their mask at all other times (sitting the bench, waiting, not actively participating)

We will continue to revise and release adjusted documents as these guidelines are released. Currently Aquinas has two students out due to positive results and 10 in quarantine. With the new guidelines some of those in quarantine will be able to return next week. Aquinas also has three staff members isolated due to positive tests, and two of those three may return on Monday. Aquinas continues to require masks, surface sanitizing, and social distancing.