



November 11, 2020

News release: for immediate release

Submitted by:



## **Sioux County healthcare leaders urge masking – including in churches**

*Asking for public's help in slowing the surge of COVID-19*

Following Iowa Governor Kim Reynolds' proclamation on November 10 regarding masking and indoor gatherings, the CEOs of the four Sioux County hospitals – along with Community Health Partners – are imploring all residents of Sioux County to help slow the spread of COVID-19 by adhering to gathering restrictions and mask requirements. Wearing masks in indoor public settings helps reduce the spread of COVID-19.

“We as a hospital and health system community implore each resident and visitor in Sioux County to follow the Governor’s proclamation requiring masking for indoor gatherings of 25 or more people,” stated the health system leaders, adding “Specifically, we urge every church to strongly consider voluntarily submitting to this protocol as well.”

According to the health system leaders, at least 15 Sioux County residents currently are hospitalized with the COVID-19 virus. Sioux County has had an additional 95 positive cases in the past two days. The county’s 14-day positivity rate (the percent of people testing positive among those tested) is now 29.4 percent.



“Sioux County is experiencing substantial community spread of COVID-19,” the health system leaders state. “The strain on the local healthcare systems and their employees is very real, and we need to keep our healthcare workers safe and available to care for those who need it.”

Governor Reynolds’ November 10 proclamation states that any social, community, recreational, leisure, or sports gathering or event of more than 25 people held indoors, or more than 100 people outdoors, is prohibited through November 30 unless all participants over the age of two wear masks at all times except while eating or drinking. Spiritual and religious gatherings are exempt from this prohibition; however, healthcare leaders are strongly urging Sioux County churches to voluntarily adopt the mask requirement for group gatherings through November 30.

During this very challenging time, health care leaders and CHP ask the faith community to help preserve our healthcare resources and slow the community spread of COVID-19 by strongly considering wearing masks in church.