MEDIA ALERT

Elkhart County Health Department releases CDC Community Assessment

Elkhart, Indiana (October 21, 2020) -- The Elkhart County Health Department, local city and county officials, press, and the public at large have long waited to receive the Center for Disease Controls (CDC) final report providing the CDC's community assessment of COVID-19 in Elkhart County. The Elkhart County Health Department requested that the CDC prepare its report in a way that permitted its release to the public and press.

During the afternoon of October 20, 2020, the Elkhart County Health Department first received the CDC's final report (CDC Community Assessment). Today, the CDC authorized the Elkhart County Health Department to release the CDC Community Assessment to the public and press.

The Elkhart County Health Department is pleased to have released the highly anticipated CDC Community Assessment. The CDC Community Assessment evaluated COVID-19 in Elkhart County, Indiana from July 6, 2020, to August 5, 2020. The CDC Community Assessment provides general background of the assessment, an epidemiological analyses of COVID-19 in Elkhart County, a qualitative investigation related to the CDC's interviews, a case investigation and contract tracing assessment, and general recommendations. The CDC recommendations pertain not only to the Elkhart County Health Department, but also to the Indiana Department of Health, local businesses, and the general public.

The assessment was initiated by the Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH) after Elkhart County became a 'hot spot' of COVID-19 cases earlier this summer. The CDC Community Assessment was delayed from its anticipated initial release date as a result of the CDC's review, revision, and clearance process.

The Elkhart County Health Department will be considering all recommendations provided in the CDC Community Assessment. "The release of this report comes at a time when we're experiencing another spike in cases," said Dr. Lydia Mertz, Elkhart County Health Officer. "But, we can get this under control. Folks need to go back to wearing a mask in public, social distancing, staying home if they are sick, and washing their hands." The Elkhart County Health Officer issued the Best Prevention Practices for COVID-19 on October 20, 2020.

A copy of the CDC's Community Assessment and the Health Officer's Best Prevention Practices for COVID-19 can be viewed at ElkhartCounty.com.

ABOUT THE ELKHART COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT:

The Elkhart County Health Department began in 1949. The first staff included a part-time Health Commissioner, Public Health Nurses who visited in schools and homes, Sanitarians who inspected restaurants and dairy farms, plus Vital Record Clerks who kept birth and death records. Today the department consists of over 100 people, including 70 full-time employees, working in five divisions. The Health Department offers services to all county residents with a vision of "Healthy Lives, Healthy Communities."

The Department is led by a Health Officer who is entrusted with the responsibility of addressing the public health concerns of Elkhart County. This is accomplished through the various divisions and programs of the Health Department. Our mission, and the mission of all health departments throughout the United States, is to promote a healthy life and lifestyle by increasing the quality and years of healthy life and eliminating health disparities. We carry out our mission in association with the Indiana State Department of Health, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and other governmental and public health agencies.

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