

Lorain County Public Health
9880 South Murray Ridge Road
Elyria, OH 44035

March 29, 2020

Hello Community Leaders,

Lorain County Public Health (LCPH) continues to see more cases of Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) locally since community spread is happening in communities across Ohio. Community spread means that people have been infected with the virus, including people who are not sure how or where they became infected. When case data is shared by zip code (geographic area) this implies there are *hotspots* or elevated areas of risk when compared to the entire region. It would be blatantly false for LCPH to share COVID-19 case data in this way, and it could lead to a false sense of security for people who may think they have a lower risk if their zip code has few or no confirmed cases.

During this pandemic sometimes the media gets the information right. Unfortunately, printing a geographic map of cases is an example of getting it wrong. If sharing and reading data on a zip code map leads to people taking less steps to prevent the spread of the virus, COVID-19 could spread even faster and add stress to our healthcare system. Cases shared by zip code are not based on the extent that the virus in our community spread from person to person, rather zip code data is influenced by population-level characteristics (age, access to testing, access to healthcare, severity of symptoms, etc).

Remember, most people with symptoms of COVID-19 do not need to be tested and most people recover well at home. It's important that testing be for people who are the sickest, or who have a high risk of getting very sick, or for professionals who are essential to provide care and service to people who are very sick.

LCPH continues to update our

website www.LorainCountyHealth.com/coronavirus with countywide confirmed cases and to promote health and safety messages. COVID-19 is spreading in all of our communities -- We all need to stay at home, keep a physical distance of at least 6 feet, cover our coughs, and wash our hands. Together we can all help to slow the virus down and to protect everyone who calls Lorain County home.

Thank you.

Dave Covell, MPH, RS
Health Commissioner
Lorain County Public Health

[LorainCountyHealth.com/coronavirus](http://www.LorainCountyHealth.com/coronavirus)

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