



Elkhart County Health Department

Health Officer

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Elkhart County Contact Tracing FAQ

Q: What is Contact Tracing?

A: Contact Tracing is a tool used by public health officials to identify people who may have come in contact with a disease by asking sick individuals questions about whom they've interacted with. Contact Tracing has been used for decades to help control diseases like tuberculosis or HIV. Currently, Contact Tracing is being used to help control the spread of coronavirus in our community.

Q: How is Elkhart County handling Contact Tracing?

A: Normally, a small team of dedicated nurses handle contact tracing for our county. However, the Indiana State Department of Health has taken over most the job. A company named Maximus has roughly 500 trained individuals who are doing all primary contact tracing for Indiana's COVID-19 cases. The county health department is still doing tracing if Maximus cannot contact an individual or the positive person lives in a congregate setting (nursing home, group home, etc.).

Q: Do people cooperate with Contact Tracing?

A: When the county was still handling primary contact tracing, people were overwhelmingly cooperative. The number of cases where individuals refused to share information were fewer than 5. There are instances where we simply cannot reach people though.

Q: How do we guarantee people who has tested positive stay isolated?

A: Part of the contact tracing process involves follow-up calls to check on symptoms and help the positive person know when they can leave isolation. During these follow-up calls, the tracers remind and encourage the sick person to isolate and stay away from others.

Q: Why is the public not given information about positive cases and contact tracing?

A: Despite the unprecedented nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, we must still keep individual's health information private. Giving out too much information about individual cases like where they work or live would potentially be in violation of HIPAA and could have negative consequences for the sick.

Q: Does contact tracing help identify hot spots?

A: Yes, contact tracing can point to locations that seem to have unusually high numbers of positive cases. In these situations, Elkhart County's community health nurses will reach out to help these locations deal with their surge. This is another example of how the local health department remains engaged in fighting the coronavirus.

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