



**An open letter from the Wood County Health Commissioner to our Wood County community:**

We are currently seeing unprecedented COVID-19 numbers across Ohio, including in Wood County. As of today, we estimate that as many as 1 in 50 people in Wood County could be contagious with COVID-19. Because of this, we are urging all Wood County residents to limit both the number and size of gatherings.

This is even more important as we enter the holiday season. We have seen case increases in the weeks that follow holidays throughout this pandemic. In the weeks since Halloween, the total COVID-19 cases in Wood County increased 46 percent, from 2,695 on Oct. 28 to 3,922 on Nov. 18. If we go into the Thanksgiving holiday with increasing cases, we could face even more substantial surges in mid-December and a more daunting challenge at the end of the year.

For us to reverse this trend, all Wood County residents must work together to respond at this critical time. With the availability of COVID-19 vaccines in sight, we are imploring everyone to remain vigilant—to make every effort to reduce and prevent the spread of this virus in Wood County. Like many of you, I am growing weary of COVID-19. But now is not the time to give up! If we persevere in doing the things that prevent this disease (wearing masks, 6+ feet of distancing, staying home when sick, and limiting our gatherings), we will see our cases retreat and our community continue to recover.

Last week Wood County was elevated to Level 3 (Red) in the Ohio Public Health Advisory System, and it remains so this week. As a red county, we are under a state advisory to limit gatherings of any size as much as possible. So I am encouraging you, as much as possible, to gather with just your household and limit your activities to only those things that are essential. This may include going to work, responding to an emergency, accessing medical care, or getting groceries or food from a restaurant.

It is a distinct privilege to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with you during this time. As your health department, we greatly appreciate your continued partnership and resilience as our community continues to navigate this pandemic. Thank you for your consideration, and we look forward to a time in the now, not-so-distant future, when we will all be able to put this pandemic behind us.

Until then, stay strong.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Benjamin Robison".

Benjamin Robison, MPH  
Wood County Health Commissioner