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Sturgis - Community COVID-19 Testing Results

The City of Sturgis recently conducted a mass COVID-19 testing event following the 2020 City of Sturgis Motorcycle Rally. The testing was conducted by Monument Health on August 21, 24, and 25. The tests were conducted five to nine days following the official last day of the motorcycle rally event and 11-15 days from the peak day of attendance. The CDC’s guidance states the median incubation time is 4-5 days from exposure to symptoms onset. 97.5% of persons who develop symptoms will do so within 11.5 days of infection.

The City contracted for up to 1,300 tests which represents 20% of the community’s population. The testing was reserved for four different groups; City Employees (mandatory), School District Employees (voluntary), Employees of Private Businesses throughout the community (voluntary), and Residents of Sturgis (voluntary). Despite having 1,300 tests available, only 650 individuals chose to take part in the free testing event. All individuals requesting a test were asymptomatic at the time of testing. The Department of Health reports asymptomatic positives state-wide fall in the range of 3% to 7% on average. Our community average of 4% falls within this range.

Group	Number Tested	Number Positive
City Employees*	83	3
School District Employees	35	1
Front-Line Workers	217	11
Residents and Walk-Ins	315	11
Totals	650	26

**One of the City employees testing positive worked in close contact with the public. First responders were not tested in this group.*

Overall, positive cases within the five counties within the Black Hills Region were steady throughout the summer period and began increasing on July 27. As expected, the increase in testing resulted in an increase in positive cases being identified in the community. The tests allowed COVID-19 positive individuals to take necessary measures to avoid unknowingly spreading the infection to others. The Sturgis testing event did not include individuals who were experiencing symptoms or who may have been tested at other locations. We recognize that there are additional active cases in Sturgis and more cases will be identified in the future.

In an effort to continue to aid those that prefer to minimize their exposure, the City is continuing to maintain all COVID-19 protocols that have been in place for several months. The Good Deeds Program, along with curb-side book delivery, and online programming are all still available through the Sturgis Library. To use these services, please call the library at 347-2624. All city facilities will continue to practice enhanced sanitization protocols and city employees will continue to follow health guidelines.

According to data provided by the South Dakota Department of Health, hospital ICU capacity, as well as ventilator availability, remained unchanged from pre-rally to post-rally. State classification of "substantial Community Spread" also remains unchanged. Though total attendees of the event far surpassed all anticipations, the vast majority of attendees greatly changed their behaviors by spending far less time in downtown Sturgis and far more time socially distant, riding the beautiful Black Hills.

The testing initiative was just one of the measures put in place to protect residents and attendees from the spread of COVID-19 during the event which encompassed several hundred square miles. Additionally, the City also provided PPE supplies to area businesses and provided free shopping and delivery services to all residents who chose to remain at home before, during, and after the Rally event.

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