



To: Crawford County School Administrators and Crawford County Residents
From: Crawford County Health Officers
Re: Letter of Support for KSHSAA Winter Sports Moratorium and In-Person Learning
December 2, 2020

The current situation in Crawford County, Kansas:

1. From November 1 to November 30, there have been 944 new cases of Covid-19 in the community, of which 799 are 18 and older.
2. Of the 145 cases in the age group of 0-17, we have found only rare verifiable in-school transmission of Covid-19 but have found significant transmission within the home and community.
3. The case rate has remained steady at the elevated rate for the past several weeks despite efforts to mitigate spread within the community through education and awareness campaigns.
4. County risk of transmission assessment and mitigation recommendations will continue to be based on the current data, current science and common sense approach that is currently in place.

On November 24, 2020, the Kansas State High School Activities Association (KSHSAA) released a memorandum detailing the direction for winter sports activities. In this document, the Board of Directors established the rules for winter sports activities. While sports activities may continue according to their guidance, spectators are not allowed to be in person at KSHSAA sanctioned events from December 1, 2020 through January 28, 2020. Given the current number of cases, and the impact of COVID on the community, the Health Officers for Crawford County endorse this recommendation. While we have noted very few in-school transmissions of Covid-19, there is significant community based spread of the virus making spectators at increased risk for transmitting the virus. If the KSHSAA recommendation were to change, the Health Officers will evaluate the current status of the community and provide guidance at that time.

Due to the increased risk of spreading illness during school sponsored gatherings, the Crawford County Health Officers also recommend postponing or offering virtual-only alternatives of holiday events, such as concerts or programs, through December 2020. This recommendation will be reevaluated at the end of December and further recommendations will be made for January 2021 and the following months based on current county data and the impact on the community. If a school opts to hold an event, a mitigation plan must be submitted and approved by the Health Officers prior to proceeding with the event.

Despite the current concerns for possible transmission of Covid-19 at spectator events, the Health Officers continue to recommend in-person learning for our school districts in Crawford County. The school districts continue to follow strict safety measures, and in-school transmission remains extremely rare. Students and school staff are less likely to become exposed and ill from COVID in the school environment than in the community. Additionally, school provides resources that support students' physical, social, emotional well-being and learning needs better than any other option available including hybrid and remote learning. We further recommend to the districts that every effort be made to continue in-person instruction for the elementary school students as these students are the most negatively impacted by remote learning and they are the lowest risk for transmission of COVID and severe illness. The in-school transmission rate will continue to be monitored and recommendations will change if the rate of transmission increases within our schools.

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