**TIP SHEET: DETERMINING 14-DAY COVID-19 POSITIVITY RATE IN YOUR COUNTY (October 12, 2020)**

CMS and MDH have directed nursing homes and housing with services/assisting living settings to use the **14-day COVID-19 county positivity rate** (the number of positive tests divided by the total number of tests performed) for specific purposes and have specified what data source should be used to determine that rate:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **What decision(s) does the positivity rate inform?** | **What data do we use to determine the positivity rate?** |
| **Nursing Homes** | * When and how to facilitate indoor visitation * Frequency of routine testing of facility staff (x2/week, weekly, or monthly) | You may use either CMS data or MDH data, but you must pick one data source and stick with it. Do not switch back and forth between the two data sources. |
| **Housing with Services / Assisted Living** | * When and how to facilitate indoor visitation | You must use the data found on the MDH website. |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Both CMS and MDH classify the 14-day county positivity rates as Low, Medium or High and direct providers to make visitation and staff testing decisions based on these categories: | **Low: <5%** | **Medium: 5-10%** | **High: > 10%** |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Frequency of Staff Testing** | **Visitation** |
| **Nursing Homes** | * Low: monthly * Medium: weekly * High: twice-weekly | * Low: Visitation should occur * Medium: Visitation should occur * High: Visitation should not occur except Essential Caregiver and Compassionate Care situations |
| **Housing with Services / Assisted Living** | Not applicable. | * Low: Visitation should occur * Medium: Visitation should occur * High: Visitation should not occur except Essential Caregiver and Compassionate Care situations |

This tool is designed to help you locate and document the 14-day COVID-19 positivity rate for your county. Contact Jon Lips ([jlips@leadingagemn.org](mailto:jlips@leadingagemn.org)) or Kari Everson ([keverson@leadingagemn.org](mailto:keverson@leadingagemn.org)) with questions.

# IDENTIFYING 14-DAY COUNTY POSITIVITY RATE USING CMS DATA (Nursing homes may use CMS data or MDH data. HWS/AL must use the MDH data.)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **1** | The CMS published county positivity rates are located [HERE](https://data.cms.gov/stories/s/COVID-19-Nursing-Home-Data/bkwz-xpvg). The information is updated weekly. When you arrive at the webpage, scroll down to the **COVID-19 Testing** section and click on the circled link: |
| **2** | A .zip file automatically downloads. Open it and save the spreadsheet to your computer: |
| **3** | The spreadsheet provides data for all counties in all fifty states, so you can either scroll down until you reach Minnesota, or search for your county by name, or filter the file so it displays only Minnesota counties and then scroll. Counties will appear in alphabetical order. |
| **4** | CMS displays data for a 14-day period and color codes it. You will not need to make a calculation. |
| **5** | Identify your county, note the positivity rate and color-coded categorization and implement routine staff testing and visitation policies accordingly. Save the file and document the date on which you checked the data, the applicable date range, the 14-day positivity rate, and the classification (Low, Medium or High) for your records. This documentation will be important to demonstrate compliance with applicable requirements. |

# IDENTIFYING 14-DAY COUNTY POSITIVITY RATE USING MDH DATA (Nursing homes may use CMS data or MDH data. HWS/AL must use the MDH data.)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **1** | Navigate to the MDH COVID-19 Weekly Report ([LINK](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/stats/index.html#wcrmap1)). This report is updated every Thursday and includes detailed information on testing, confirmed positive cases, demographics, likely exposure, and syndromic surveillance. Select the **Weekly Test Rate by County of Residence** link and click download the Weekly Percent of Tests Positive by County of Residence (CSV) file. | |
| **2** | When you click the link a data file automatically downloads. Open it and save the spreadsheet to your computer: |  |
| **3** | The file gives data for all 87 Minnesota counties, so simply scroll to find your county. Here’s an example of what you will see: | |
| **4** | MDH displays data for consecutive 7-day periods and does not color code it or otherwise classify the rate as Low, Medium or High. You will have to do that math. To calculate 14-day positivity rate, take data for the two most recent weeks, add the rates together, and divide by two. For example, if you were doing the calculation for Aitkin County on October 1, you would use add the positivity rates shown for the weeks ending 09/19 and 09/26 and divide by two: *2.20% + 3.10% = 5.30%. 5.30% ÷ 2 = 2.65% . 2.65% < 5%, meaning Aitkin County’s 14 day positivity rate as of October 1 is classified as Low.* | |
| **5** | Identify your county, calculate the 14-day positivity rate as described above, and implement routine staff testing and visitation policies accordingly. Save the file and document the date on which you checked the data, the applicable date range of the data you used, the 14-day positivity rate, and the classification (Low, Medium or High) for your records. This documentation will be important to demonstrate compliance with applicable requirements. | |