



## NEWS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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# Illinois Department of Public Health Centralizing COVID-19 Contact Tracing

*COVID-19 cases will receive a text message from IDPH*

**SPRINGFIELD** –As we head into 2022, the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) is working to centralize COVID-19 contact tracing efforts in order to get information about isolation and identifying close contacts to infected individuals as soon as possible during times when cases are surging, and to decrease the burden on local health departments across the state. Beginning today, December 28, 2021, all positive cases entered into the State’s data systems associated with a cell phone number will receive an automated text message from IDPH. The initial outgoing text will read:

**IDPH COVID: There is important info for you. Call 312-777-1999 or click:**

<https://dph.illinois.gov/covid19/community-guidance/confirmed-or-possible-covid-19.html>

“Our response to the COVID-19 pandemic continues to evolve as does the virus,” said IDPH Director Dr. Ngozi Ezike. “We are seeing a higher number of new infections each day than we have seen at any time throughout the entire pandemic. In an effort to reduce the burden on the local health departments across the state, the State will notify cases via text about interviewing with a contact tracer, as well as providing a link to guidance on quarantine, possible treatments, and close contact notification. There have been scams associated with COVID-19 and contact tracing so I want people to know that IDPH COVID will be issuing text messages to newly identified cases.”

Individuals who call the number in the text will be considered as “opting in” for an interview. Public health officials will prioritize case investigations for individuals who are 65 years and older and are at higher risk of severe illness, per Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [recommendations](#). This population will receive an additional text message if the individual does not respond to the initial message.

While most confirmed cases will be traced through the State Contact Tracing Surge Center, local health departments will continue to respond to cases in high-risk settings, including congregate facilities. Local health departments will also be able to see details about cases so they can identify any potential clusters or outbreaks and can request those cases be transferred from the Surge Center for further contact tracing. Additionally, local health departments will continue to have oversight of schools, daycares, and congregate setting, including assistance with mitigation strategies and outbreak management.

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