



BARRON COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES



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For Immediate Release

To: Barron County Community, Media

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COVID-19 Case Cluster in Barron County

Barron County Department of Health and Human Services is working closely with Seneca Foods to respond to a cluster of positive COVID-19 cases in the Cumberland facility.

“We are taking a united approach to this response by identifying people who are positive or symptomatic as quickly as possible and ensuring that they get the care they need,” said Matt Henschler, SVP Technical Services – Responsible for Employee and Foods Safety with Seneca Foods. “Individuals are being isolated and monitored until cleared to resume activity. CDC guidelines regarding the preparation and management for COVID-19 are being followed.”

Barron County has seen a large increase in positive COVID-19 cases over the past 14 days with 150 new cases reported.

“It is important to know this is not the only cause for the increase in cases. The large spike cannot be connected to one location or single event, said Health Officer Laura Sauve. “Many of the new cases coming in can be traced back to gatherings and travel. We need people to understand that no place is risk free.”

The Cumberland plant followed recommendations set by the CDC at the onset of COVID-19. These include but are not limited to; extensive and continued testing using the Wisconsin National Guard and area healthcare providers, communication and training sessions with the employees, taking temperatures daily, monitoring each employee for symptoms, requiring masks or a face coverings, implementing social distancing measures and controls and designating isolation facilities. In addition, sanitation measures and frequency have been significantly increased and restrictions for visitors have been implemented.

“Seneca Foods did a good job of following recommendations a head of time to try and prevent cases, Sauve continued. “This situation shows just how quickly the virus can spread.”

Our top priority is the health and safety of the workers, their families and the community. It is important that everyone in the community continue to take steps to prevent the spread of COVID-19. This means:

- Social distancing - Staying at least 6 feet from other people when you go out
- Avoid crowded spaces Wearing a facemask in public AND when you are unable to social distance
- Not traveling unless necessary
- Washing your hands often with soap and water and using alcohol-based hand sanitizers
- Covering your coughs and sneezes with your elbow or a tissue.

These simple steps are effective and can make a difference in how quickly this virus spreads. They are the best ways to slow the spread of disease in our community and protect those most vulnerable. While COVID-19 can be mild for some people, those who are older or have underlying medical conditions can be at a higher risk for severe illness. Everyone knows someone who is at higher risk—a family member, neighbor, coworker—we all have to work together to protect them.

If you have symptoms of COVID-19, such as fever, cough, body aches, sore throat or shortness of breath, stay home. Call your local health care provider before going to the clinic or a hospital. They will give you information on what to do.

If you have questions about COVID-19, please dial 2-1-1. You can also text COVID-19 to 211-211. For the latest information, follow Barron County Public Health on Facebook or visit the Wisconsin Department of Health Services website.

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