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To: All Media

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For Immediate Release

CHANGES TO CONTACT TRACING BEGIN JANUARY 13, 2022

Contact tracing and disease investigation are important public health tools. The Peoria City/County Health Department, Tazewell County Health Department, and Woodford County Health Departments continue work to control COVID-19 in our communities and stabilize the healthcare systems.

Since the first case of COVID-19 in the tri-county on March 13, 2020, public health leaders have learned many lessons in the value of public health interventions - the most important is that vaccines have proven to reduce the number of hospitalizations and deaths in our most vulnerable residents.

The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) will begin a centralized contact tracing system on January 13, 2022, **to address the high volume of cases**. **Positive cases will receive a text message** from the IDPH Surge Center and must opt into the system to receive a return-to-work letter. The Surge Center will handle the majority of calls for contact tracing and disease investigation. The IDPH Surge Center may be reached by calling 1-312-777-1999 for assistance with a letter or any contact tracing question.

With the shortened isolation and quarantine periods, IDPH and local health departments are using contact tracing with a focus on high-risk individuals. Please note: a positive individual &/or close contact who is not high-risk may not receive a contact tracer callback and return-to-work letter before their isolation/quarantine period is finished. **Businesses need to be prepared for a possible delay or stoppage of letters.** (Example: An employee may not have a letter available to present to prove that isolation/quarantine is over). Businesses may want to re-evaluate their protocols in requiring return to work letters.

Please do not call Peoria, Tazewell and Woodford County Health Departments directly for a return letter. Request a letter from the IDPH Surge Center by calling 1-312-777-1999.

For additional information on COVID-19, visit

Peoria City/County Health Department, www.pcchd.org

Tazewell County Health Department, www.tazewellhealth.org

Woodford County Health Department, www.woodfordhealth.org

Peoria City/County Health Department:
<https://www.pcchd.org/289/COVID-19-Coronavirus>

Tazewell County Health Department: <https://www.tazewellhealth.org/381/CORONAVIRUS-COVID-19>

Woodford County Health Department:
<http://www.woodfordhealth.org/595/COVID-19---Coronavirus>

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