

# Press Release

**For Release: Immediately**

*Reno County, Kansas*

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## **RENO COUNTY – Collaboration on School Gating Criteria**

Reno County Health Department in collaboration with the Reno County School Superintendents and the Hutchinson Clinic have worked together to adapt the School Gating Criteria for Reno County put forth by Kansas Department of Health and Environment and Kansas Department of Education to be utilized by local testing metrics.

Reno County school districts will be utilizing the school gating criteria guide with a 14-day positive test rate (PTR) metric based on the population of Reno County.

In order to get an accurate 14-day positive testing rate for Reno County, we need to test 3.6% of the population every month. An accurate positive testing rate will tell us what is going on in our community with both symptomatic (those who are COVID-19 positive and have symptoms) and asymptomatic (those who are COVID-19 positive but do not have any symptoms) patients. Asymptomatic patients pose a threat to the vulnerable populations in our community, as the virus can be spread without ever identifying the carrier.

We know we have community spread within Reno County. What we need to know is how far out the spread is in order to maintain our goal to keep our schools and community safely open. Communitywide testing will help us have a much clearer picture.

Currently, the Hutchinson Clinic, Prairie Star Health Center and Hutchinson Regional Medical Center are testing patients for COVID-19 in our community. The Reno County Health Department is working on grant funding that will be utilized for communitywide testing that will be open to the public. Planning for communitywide testing has been on the radar from Public Health Emergency Preparedness staff and preliminary plans are already set in motion.

Please continue to be vigilant by washing your hands, social distance by at least six feet or more, wear a mask when you are in public places and stay at home if you are not feeling well. It is very important that people continue to follow the guidelines to help decrease the spread of COVID-19.

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