

Alton Mental Health Center's 53 Confirmed COVID-19 Cases In 47 Days Troubling To Legislators, Health Officials

by Patrick Laughlin
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The following statement can be attributed to State Senator Rachelle Crowe, State Representative Monica Bristow, the Illinois Department of Human Services, AFSCME Council 31, the Illinois Nurses Association, and the Madison County Health Department:

ALTON - The health, safety, and well-being of employees and patients at Alton Mental Health Center are of the utmost importance.

The 53 confirmed COVID-19 cases in the last 47 days among 29 Alton Mental Health Center staff and 24 patients is troubling.

We care about and hope for a quick and full recovery for every person who has tested positive. We are united in concern for every individual working for or residing at the Alton Mental Health Center who has tested positive for COVID-19 – for their families and for their fellow patients and colleagues. Together, we are urging everyone in Madison County to work together in the public interest to limit further spread of COVID-19. We know that Madison County resides in Illinois' COVID Region 4, which has exceeded IDPH criteria for COVID-19 community transmission, which has triggered additional mitigation measures to combat resurgence and prevent uncontrollable spread.

Currently, the COVID-19 positivity rate in Madison County is 9.1% (compared to 3.9%, statewide) and new cases per 100,000 stands at 195, both greatly exceeding state targets for containing the virus.

To protect the staff of Alton Mental Health Center – and those in our community – we remind everyone, outside of your home and household: please wear a face covering, wash your hands, and practice social distancing measures. This is as important in our personal lives as it is in our professional ones.

Interactions with people outside of our households should be limited and when they do take place, they must include face coverings and social distancing. We will continue to collaborate to encourage area residents to follow the recommendations set forth by IDPH and the CDC. These small actions can save lives and prevent short-and long-term health problems.

Note: Patrick Laughlin is the Deputy Director of Communications for the Illinois Department of Human Services.