

**To the Mayor and Members of the City Council****September 19, 2023**

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**SUBJECT: COVID-19 RESOURCES FOR CITY EMPLOYEES AND THE COMMUNITY**

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the City's COVID-19 resources for City of Fort Worth employees and the community.

**Background**

From March 2020 through April 2022, the City of Fort Worth joined the global effort to combat the 2019 coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic in response to a public health emergency. As demands on the healthcare system fluctuated with COVID-19 and its variants, the City increased and decreased support operations accordingly. The impact of these waves/variants on public health services and healthcare systems has steadily decreased as vaccination rates and mitigation strategies have increased. As a result, there is not a significant gap currently for the City of Fort Worth to fill at this time. The City is not actively operating its emergency operation center, but staff remain prepared to respond in the future.

As the City of Fort Worth and the community move into the Fall season of 2023, it can be anticipated that there will be an increase in cases of influenza, COVID-19, and other respiratory illnesses which are common each year. In recent weeks, there have been increased COVID-19 illnesses reported. However, incidence rates are not at levels seen in prior years. Additionally, there is no longer an emergency declaration in place, and the healthcare community continues to manage COVID-19 within existing systems and with existing resources. At this time, the City of Fort Worth and partners continue to monitor COVID-19 data and trends. Current healthcare systems and traditional healthcare will continue to assume all COVID-19 testing and vaccination responsibilities for the community and our City of Fort Worth employees. While COVID-19 is not an active public health emergency, COVID-19 testing and vaccination resources remain available through traditional healthcare and the free market. Barring a future emergency declaration, the City of Fort Worth will continue to defer to the community's healthcare providers.

**Resources for City of Fort Worth Employees**

The Human Resources Department continues to provide information regarding the City's COVID-19 protocols regarding exposures and positive COVID-19 tests through departmental Human Resource Coordinators (HRCs). The Human Resources Department will continue to share updates about COVID-19 resources and guidelines in the City's employee newsletter and through departmental HRCs.

The City of Fort Worth continues to provide COVID-19 rapid tests available to departmental HRCs. These rapid tests have been issued an extended expiration date by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. At this time, once COVID-19 rapid test inventories are exhausted, the City will discontinue ordering additional rapid tests and refer employees to traditional healthcare providers for medical testing needs. City of Fort Worth employees on the City's health plan can receive COVID-19 testing at the City Health Centers or through local provider networks and pharmacies.

In March 2023, the City withdrew from participation in the Texas Department of State Health Services (TX DSHS) COVID-19 Vaccine Program and transferred all remaining vaccines to local healthcare providers for distribution. At this time, the City is no longer a state-authorized vaccine provider; operations have transitioned back to traditional healthcare providers for all COVID-19 vaccination needs.

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City staff will collaborate with Tarrant County Public Health and benefit partners to ensure employees have access to COVID-19 information, testing, vaccines and booster shots. City employees and their families can also expect resources to be available at the Health, Safety and Benefits Fair on October 18, 2023 at Will Rogers Memorial Center.

**COVID-19 Resources for the Community**

On May 11, 2023, the federal government ended the COVID-19 public health emergency declaration. On June 1, 2023, the federal government suspended free rapid tests to households. However, additional federal resources and information remain available: <https://www.covid.gov/>.

Tarrant County Public Health (TCPH) serves as the primary public health agency for the majority of the City of Fort Worth. In addition, the City of Fort Worth works with other counties and area agencies that provide similar services within the community. TCPH continues to offer COVID-19 vaccines as a part of their standard immunization services at TCPH immunization clinics throughout the county. While TCPH no longer offers COVID-19 testing at their public health clinics, the agency does currently offer at-home rapid test kits for Tarrant County residents who register online (limit 5 per address). For more information, contact TCPH by phone, 817-321-4700, or online at: <http://health.tarrantcounty.com>.

For Fort Worth residents in other counties, please contact respective county health department.

COVID-19 testing and vaccination services can also be found through traditional healthcare to include primary care providers and pharmacies.

For any questions on this report, please contact Brandon Bennett, Code Compliance Director, at (817) 392-6322 or Dianna Giordano, Human Resources Director, at (817) 392-7783.

**David Cooke**  
**City Manager**