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#MASKUP Cook County Social Media Campaign Targets ‘20-Somethings’
Age group with highest growth in cases: Wear it. Don’t spread it. Change starts with you.

COOK COUNTY, IL – Cook County Government and Cook County Department of Public Health launched the #MASKUP Cook County campaign today to encourage young adults ages 20 to 29 to make a difference in the fight against COVID-19 in suburban Cook County.

Cook County saw the biggest growth in this age group between late March and late July. During this time period, cases went up 250%, following the reopening of Illinois, with clusters of COVID-19 cases resulting from travel, parties and other social gatherings over the summer, where physical distancing and masking guidance were not being followed.

The #MASKUP Cook County campaign raises awareness that people can be asymptomatic or pre-symptomatic and spreading COVID-19 without even knowing it. When worn properly over the nose and mouth, masks have been proven highly effective in preventing the disease from spreading.

Messages encourage young adults to protect themselves, their families and their communities, and include, “Wear it. Don’t spread it. Change starts with you.” and “Do your part. #MASKUP and back up.”

The campaign also promotes practicing “The 3 W’s: Wear a mask. Watch your distance. Wash your hands.” As a group, CCDPH and other local health departments belonging to the Northern Illinois Public Health Consortium, have adopted the Illinois Department of Public Health’s 3 W’s for clear and consistent disease prevention messaging.

“COVID-19 is bigger than any one person,” said Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle. “We all have to work together to solve this problem. Masking is a huge part of the solution, in addition to physical distancing and hand hygiene, especially until we have a vaccine.”

#MASKUP Cook County social media ads will run in English and Spanish throughout suburban Cook County on YouTube, Instagram and Snapchat during the month of September. Posters and community billboards will be placed in barber and beauty shops, gas stations, corner stores and other public places in communities most affected by COVID-19, where case counts have been highest and the disease burden the heaviest, including: Bellwood, Blue Island, Burnham, Cicero, Melrose Park, Park Forest, Des Plaines, Maywood, Palos Hills, Palos Heights, and Markham.

“On August 28th, the State announced that suburban Cook County has seen an increase in 2 of the 8 metrics the state is monitoring to predict possible increased risks for contracting COVID-19,” said Cook County Department of Public Health Co-Lead and Senior Medical Officer Dr. Rachel Rubin. “Currently, before some schools return to in-person learning, we are seeing more cases in grammar- and high-school-age youth. We are keeping a watchful eye on this and asking everyone – not just young people – to #MASKUP, so we don’t have to close up.”

In August, CCDPH provided guidance to schools, including through a series of school health webinars. The health department is prioritizing investigations of clusters in these age groups as it expands its contact tracing team to 400 staff throughout the Fall.

For more information, and to view and download marketing materials, visit www.maskupcookcounty.com. To download school health webinar series audio, video and presentation slides, visit <https://cookcountypublichealth.org/school-health/>.

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