



STAY SAFE MN

COVID-19 Update

Safely Adjusting the Dials

Office of Governor Walz and Lt. Governor Flanagan

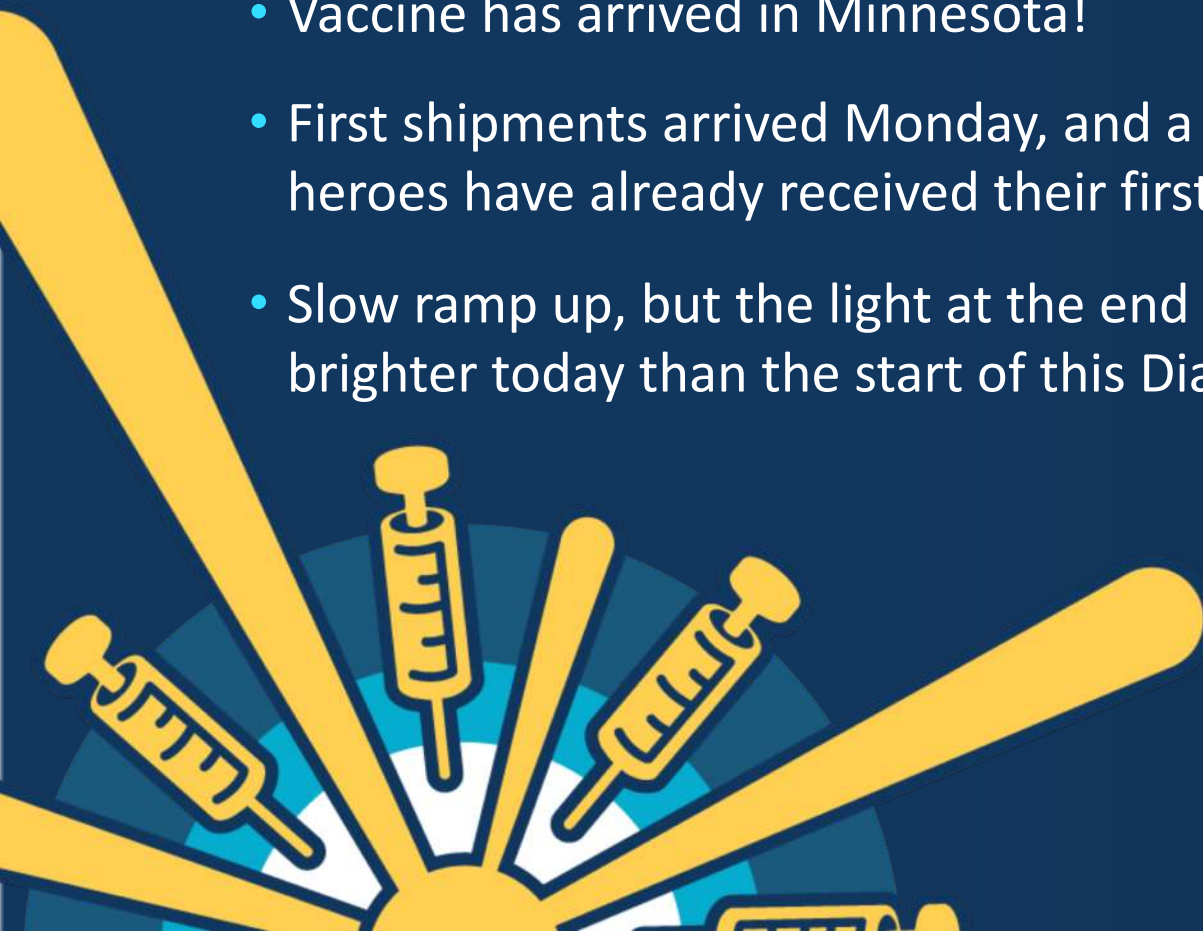
Wednesday, December 16, 2020

m MINNESOTA

State of the pandemic

The sun is rising.

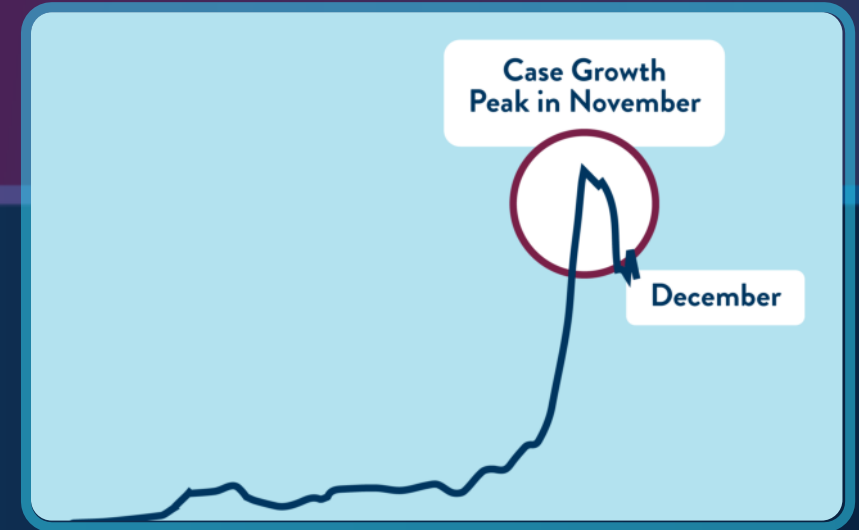
- Vaccine has arrived in Minnesota!
- First shipments arrived Monday, and a small number of front-line heroes have already received their first dose.
- Slow ramp up, but the light at the end of the tunnel is much brighter today than the start of this Dial Back.



Situation update

In November, the situation was dire.

- Cases were growing exponentially.
- Families were struggling as the pandemic forced schools into distance learning.
- Surge in hospitalizations left hospitals on the brink of catastrophic capacity issues.
- We had to take action to stop the surge.



What we did in November

Four-week pause:

- Social gathering
- In-person dining
- Adult and youth sports, fitness centers, and gyms
- Bowling alleys, bingo halls, theaters
- Receptions, private parties, other celebrations
- Outdoor events and entertainment



We are making progress

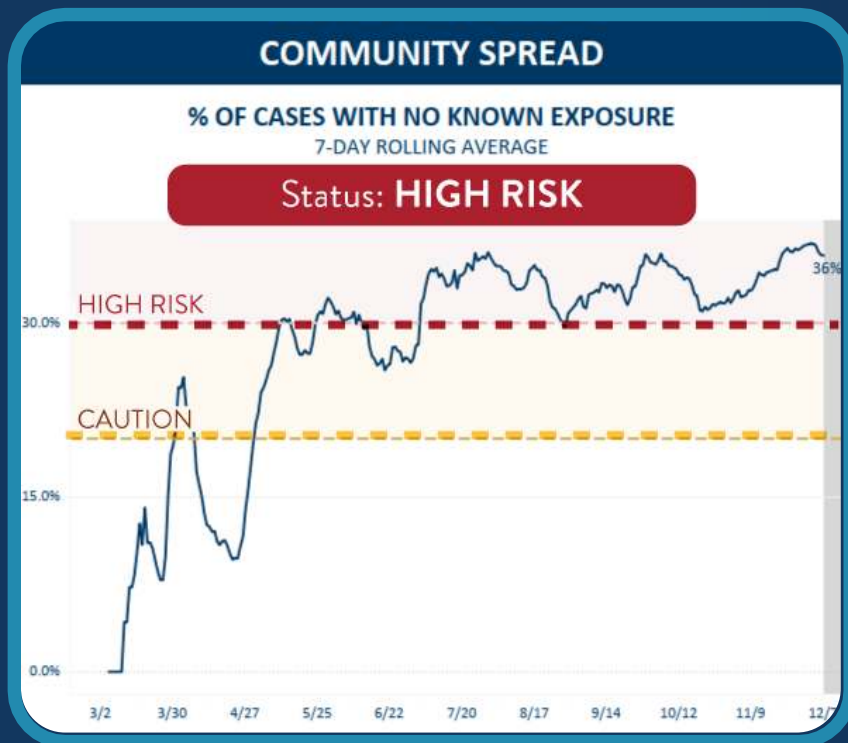
Strong evidence we are starting to turn a corner.

- As you have before, Minnesotans responded to the call to action.
- COVID-19 continues to spread through our communities at high rates, but case growth is heading in the right direction.
- Hospitals remain quite concerned about capacity, but hospitalizations are down from their high a month ago.



We're not out of the woods

The virus is widely circulating, and we must keep up our safety efforts.

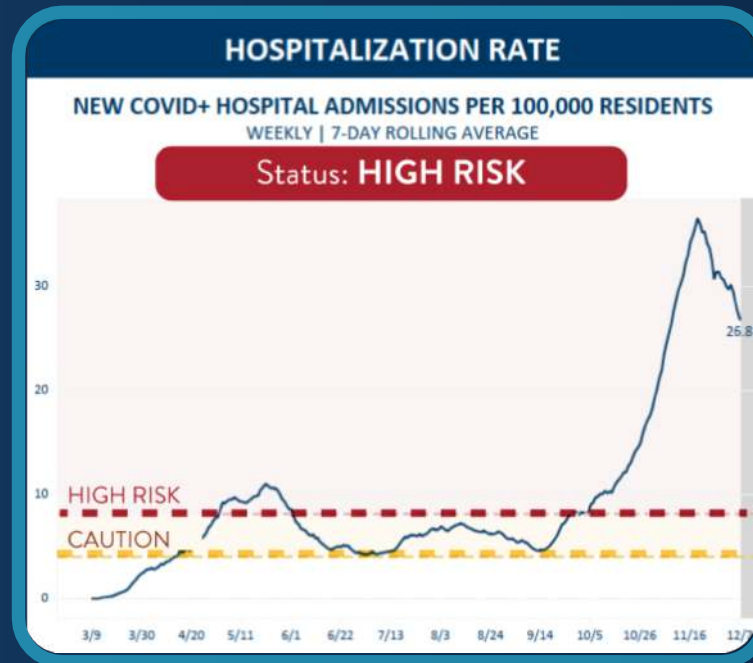
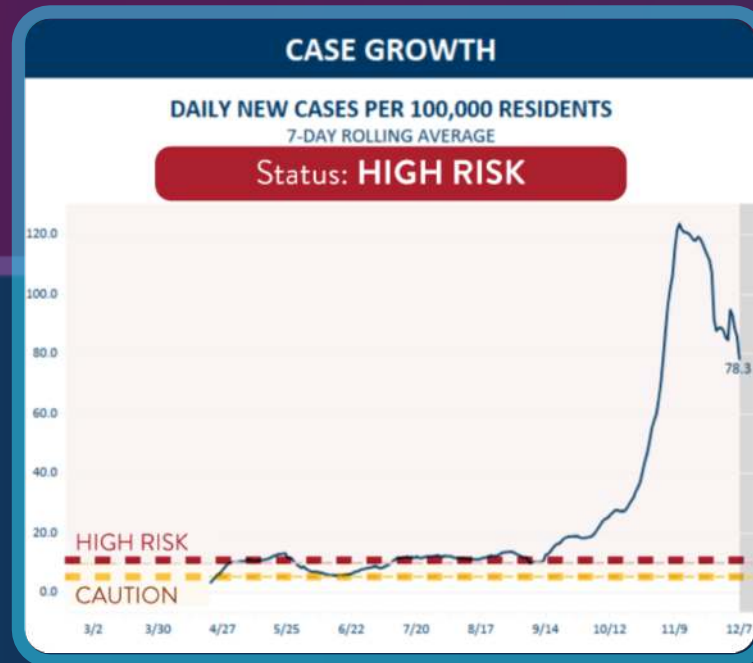


- Community spread continues at high-risk level – too many people are still becoming infected without knowing how.

Risk measures

Public health risk measures still well above pre-surge levels.

- **Case growth** nearly 8 times higher than over the summer.
- **Hospitals** remain concerned about being able to treat the most critically-ill.
- And **deaths** continue at an alarming rate, and remain significantly higher than we saw over the summer and fall.
- Our dial back helped, but we have to continue the progress.



Minnesotans have always answered the call

I have asked a lot of you, and you have responded.

March: Flatten the curve

- Ramp up PPE, build hospital capacity.

May: Manage the virus over the summer

- Prepare schools, expand testing.

November: Prevent a hospital surge

- Dial back to slow the spread and protect hospitals.



Our approach

- Listen to the best advice of the public health experts serving our state.
- Balance controlling the spread of COVID-19, the economy, and the personal well-being of all Minnesotans.
- Protect hospital capacity.
- Prioritize in-person learning, minimize death and long-term health impacts.



Today: Safely adjusting the dials

Today:

Bridge the time until vaccine is widely available

- Support students, families, and well-being.
- Continue efforts to slow spread where the risk is highest and where it is more difficult to reduce risk.
- Protect hospitals and support our frontline heroes.



Youngest learners return to classroom



Prioritize in-person learning for our youngest students

- Schools play a critical role in the health, well-being, and education of Minnesota's children.
- Youngest kids are less susceptible to serious complications from COVID-19.
- We have learned how to reduce spread in schools from success in other settings.
- January 18: Every elementary school may choose in-person if they implement certain mitigation strategies.

Support quality of life

Small social gatherings

- **Outside:** 3 households, 15 people max
- **Inside:** Recommend no indoor gathering with other households, but if you do:
 - 1 additional household, 10 people max
 - Limit time, wear a mask



Outdoor events and entertainment

- Outdoor activities permitted
- 25% capacity, 100 people max



Support quality of life - continued

Gyms and fitness studios

- Open for individuals workouts at 25% capacity/100 people max.
- Always masked, 12 feet physical distancing.
- Classes begin Jan. 4.



Youth and adult sports

- Practices may resume January 4.



Bars, restaurants, and breweries

Bars, restaurants, and breweries remain closed for indoor service until January 11.

We know some – particularly breweries – have invested to make outdoor service possible.

- May open for outdoor service at 50% capacity/100 people max.
- Not a solution but adds an option for some businesses.
- Indoor entertainment venues, event spaces, and similar establishments remain closed until January 11.



Helping small businesses stay afloat

- Small businesses have made enormous sacrifices during this pandemic for the good of our state.
- Today, I will sign into law \$216 million in direct support for small businesses and workers affected by the pandemic.
 - Direct, targeted aid to keep small businesses afloat
 - Extend unemployment benefits for workers struggling to get by
 - Help families put food on the table.
- Important step in the right direction as we continue to push for federal relief.





Keeping our hand on the dial

We have made progress and we are adjusting the dial.

- But are not out of the woods. We must stay vigilant.
 - Wear a mask.
 - Maintain physical distancing.
 - Avoid large crowds.
 - Download COVIDaware MN app – find out if you’ve been exposed to someone who tests positive.

If need be, we will dial back again to save lives, but the light at the of the tunnel is bright.





Thank you