



Monroe County Health Department

Monroe County, Indiana

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HEALTH BOARD ISSUES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COMMUNAL LIVING FACILITIES

BLOOMINGTON: The Monroe County Health Officer, Dr Thomas Sharp, and the Monroe County Health Board issued Public Health Recommendations for residential, communal living facilities at a special Health Board meeting on Tuesday, August 4, 2020.

The Health Board met after staff reported hearing concerns from Indiana University, residents and parents regarding possible increased risk of Covid-19 exposure when living in a communal environment. The recommendations do not pertain to state-owned or managed property, correctional centers, shelters, long term care facilities, recovery centers or group homes.

The recommendations go into effect on 8/5/20 for each residential, communal living facility in Monroe County. According to the Health Board Chair, Kay Leach, RN, “Communal housing guidelines are necessary due to increased number of Covid-19 cases occurring in university settings. These recommendations are designed to better protect the student population as well as local residents”.

The recommendations were created for facilities with shared dining, living, bathroom and sleeping environments and cover strategies designed to lower risk of disease transmission. Many of the strategies involve ways to maintain physical distancing, such as occupancy guidelines. Facilities are recommended to limit occupancy to 50% of its normal level of accommodation, but not to exceed 75% of its capacity.

Other physical distancing strategies include creating schedules for people to use shared spaces and limiting guests to only essential visitors.

All facilities should have isolation and quarantining spaces in the event that a resident becomes ill or exposed to the covid-19 virus, maintain record keeping along with a log with contact information on all visitors, and follow local and state health orders on face coverings and gathering size limits.

Staff from Monroe County Government and the Health Department have been working with Indiana University to provide helpful and useful guidance to limit disease spread in communal living facilities. A training and discussion with Greek leaders is tentatively scheduled for next week.

“We are trying to help the students have a great college experience. We want them to be able to stay well, keep their friends well, and to stay in school”, says Dr. Thomas Sharp, Monroe County Health Officer.

For more information on Covid-19, visit the Covid-19 page on the Monroe County Health Department webpage at www.co.monroe.in.us/healthdepartment

Complaints regarding Covid-19 can be submitted online starting 7/31/20 at www.co.monroe.in.us or at 812-803-6360.

For more detailed information on the Governor’s Back on Track Indiana Plan, visit <https://backontrack.in.gov/>.

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