



Monroe County Health Department

Monroe County, Indiana

Health Department	Futures Family Planning Clinic	Public Health Clinic
119 W. 7th Street (812) 349-2543	119 W. 7th Street (812) 349-7343	333 E. Miller Drive (812) 353-3244

PUBLIC HEALTH RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RESIDENTIAL, COMMUNAL LIVING FACILITIES PURSUANT TO STATE AND LOCAL LAW, INCLUDING INDIANA CODE § 16-20-1 et seq.

Monroe County Health Officer, Dr. Thomas W. Sharp (“Dr. Sharp”), and the Monroe County Board of Health (“Board”) share professional concerns about residential, communal living arrangements in Monroe County, Indiana. The communal living arrangements or facilities, which are the subject of these Public Health Recommendations are residences with shared dining, living, laundry, bathroom, and, in some cases, communal sleeping spaces, and where persons reside on a semi-permanent or permanent basis.¹ During the COVID-19 pandemic, residential, communal living arrangements – referred to, herein, as “facilities”, present unique and, potentially, dangerous conditions for public health and may result in the spread of COVID-19. *Recommendations were put in place for these facilities after a Board meeting on August 4th; however, statistics showed that the spread of COVID-19 in such facilities is greater than in other types of living arrangements, particularly for other types of non-communal, student living arrangements. In order to provide clear, uniform, and mandatory guidance to those such facilities, the Board met on August 28, 2020 and unanimously voted to adopt the following Regulations. As of June 15, 2021, the COVID-19 vaccine is widely available for those eligible and is being required by Indiana University. With the anticipated high level of vaccinations among IU students, faculty, and staff, the Board has re-evaluated the need for regulations and has set forth the following recommendations for fall 2021.*

Because of the inherent disease transmission risks that residential, communal living facilities present in terms of the spread of an infectious disease like COVID-19, because of their numbers of residents and shared, personal facilities, the Board, recommends the following guidance be followed by all such facilities in Monroe County. These proactive Recommendations are made, upon the advice of Dr. Sharp and Monroe County Health Administrator Penny Caudill, and, in part, on guidance from the Centers for Disease Control: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/shared-congregate-house/guidance-shared-congregate-housing.html>

These recommendations are intended and meant to provide helpful and uniform health guidance for these facilities, to reduce the likelihood that these facilities will experience concentrations of COVID-19 such that closure would be required, to prevent conditions likely to contribute to the spread of COVID-

¹ These Public Health Recommendations are not specifically intended to address state-owned or managed property, correctional centers, transient or homeless shelters, domestic violence shelters, long-term health care facilities, addiction recovery centers, or group homes for developmentally disabled persons, which may be licensed and/or subject to other formal regulatory agencies or inspections.





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19 in Monroe County, and to protect the general public and public health in Monroe County. Consideration has been given to COVID-19 vaccinations being available for those age 12 and older.

Issued to be effective June 16, 2021 at 12:00 p.m./noon, the following recommendations and guidance apply to each residential, communal living facility in Monroe County:

1. **Occupancy/Capacity** – occupancy is recommended to be up to 90% percent of the maximum number of residents that the facility is designed to and normally does accommodate when 100% of the residents are fully vaccinated, not including those with an approved vaccine exemption from Indiana University. Facilities are strongly encouraged to adopt a “cohorting” or “pod” system/protocols to reduce the exposure for anyone who may be at higher risk of illness or who has not been fully vaccinated. Isolation and Quarantine space will be needed for anyone who may experience a breakthrough infection, or who is unvaccinated and exposed or ill.
2. **Quarantine and Isolation Policies** – each facility should revise and adopt quarantine and isolation policies. It is recommended that each facility provide isolation or quarantine space for any resident, who is infected by or exposed to COVID-19 and who must isolate or quarantine, with such space including separate sleeping and bathroom space. If such space is not available in the facility, space should be located outside the facility for the resident during the isolation or quarantine period, so that other residents are not exposed.
 - A) Anyone fully vaccinated is not currently required to quarantine when exposed. They only need to monitor for symptoms. If symptoms develop, they need to be tested for COVID-19 and isolate.
 - B) Unvaccinated individuals must quarantine when exposed as a close contact. CDC guidance should be followed for separation during isolation and quarantine.
 - C) Anyone who is diagnosed with COVID-19 needs to isolate and follow current recommendations. This is true both for unvaccinated individuals and those who are fully vaccinated with breakthrough infection.
3. **Guest Policies** – each facility should adopt and implement a guest policy. Recommendations include maintaining guest logs, with accurate and reliable contact information for each guest not affiliated with the University as a student/staff or when vaccination status is unknown. Masks and physical distancing are still recommended





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for anyone who is not fully vaccinated. Fully vaccinated individuals are not required to mask or distance in their homes or in most situations. The Board recognizes that guidance does change and suggests frequent monitoring of current guidelines. Compliance with all IU policies and regulations, State, County, and City regulations is expected.

4. Employees onsite- understanding that these facilities may have employees who are not part of the IU system, the Board recommends that such individuals should be fully vaccinated or should follow mask and distancing recommendations when outside of their living quarters and interacting with residents.
5. Gathering Sizes – at this time there is no gathering limit set by the County. Caution is advised with any large, crowded events held without masks and distancing when unvaccinated people may be present. Adherence to IU event policies is expected at all times.
6. Shared Dining and Living Facilities and Meal Plans –dining and shared living space may return to pre-pandemic occupancy levels when no one living in the house is in isolation or quarantine. Meals should be delivered to anyone in isolation or quarantine. Meal plans, which provide for take-out or “to-go” meals should be implemented; in the event of a large-scale outbreak.
7. Shared Bathroom Facilities – bathrooms should be cleaned frequently. Each resident using shared bathroom facilities should wipe down the shared facility, with products provided by the facility, after each use. Separate bathrooms should be included in quarantine and isolation plans and those plans should be implemented if needed.
8. Shared Sleeping Rooms – ideally, limited numbers of people should be sharing sleeping space. Individuals in quarantine and isolation need separate sleeping space from those who are not close contacts or infected.
9. Laundry Facilities –Each resident using shared laundry facilities should wipe down the shared facility, with products provided by the facility, after each use.





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10. Face Covering Policies – each facility should have a policy regarding masks that follows IU policies and CDC guidelines. Fully vaccinated individuals are not required to wear masks in most situations; however, those who are NOT fully vaccinated should adhere to mask and distancing recommendations.
11. Record keeping – each facility should maintain record-keeping so that adherence to these Public Health Recommendations may be demonstrated. The process for how a facility will document who is fully vaccinated and exempt from quarantine or testing vs those who have received a vaccine exemption, yet must follow testing protocol and quarantine if they are a close contact should be clear and understood by residents. Maintaining confidentiality is important and should be included in the plans. It is Dr. Sharp and the Board’s goal to assist and help facilities, in order to maintain the health of the facility residents and that of the Monroe County residents, in general.
12. Air Filtration and HVAC Systems – each facility should examine their Heating, Ventilation, and Cooling (HVAC) and air-filtration systems to ensure that filters are upgraded for COVID purposes, cleaned regularly, and working properly in order to take all measures to prevent the transmission of disease.
13. The Monroe County Health Department does not anticipate the need to quarantine entire facilities when members achieve a high rate of COVID-19 vaccination. Residents and staff are expected to comply with IU testing protocols, case investigations, contact tracing, and isolation or quarantine protocols as needed. Isolation and quarantine will be managed on an individual case basis unless there is a need to expand quarantine based on a high level of infection or susceptibility within a facility.
14. It is the Monroe County Health Department’s intent to educate and gain voluntary compliance by all persons in Monroe County with their Orders, Regulations, and Recommendations. Should these Recommendations not be followed and COVID outbreaks occur in residential, communal living facilities, the Monroe County Health Department, Health Officer and/or Board of Directors may adopt regulations or take any legal measures to stop the spread of disease, including requesting or requiring the closure of facilities.





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15. These Recommendations supplement any existing Orders and Regulations and shall be in effect until rescinded.

Celinda Kay Leach, RN
Chair of the Monroe County Health Board of Directors

