



Elkhart County Health Department

July 13, 2020

The Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report of last July 10, 2020, presented data on who is most likely to die from COVID-19 infections. Pre-existing medical conditions, age over 85, are major contributors, but racial and ethnic disparities, especially in persons aged 65 or less. They note that 34.9% of Hispanic and 29.5% of non-white people who died were less than 65 years old, while only 13.2% of non-Hispanic whites under age 65 died. They speculate a higher percentage of Hispanic and non-white persons are working in the service industry, or essential businesses that preclude physical distancing. More study is needed to find the reasons for these appropriate preventive measures can be instituted. The entire report and data can be found online.

The World Health Organization in June reported that the majority of transmission of the SARS-CoV-2 virus is through infectious droplets. However, they admit it's unclear how long or how vigorously asymptomatic people spread the virus. We know people become infectious before showing symptoms (presymptomatic spread), but some persons never develop symptoms, yet test positive. It's unclear from current studies how infectious these people are. There is some evidence they are capable of spreading the virus, but it is an area still under investigation to see how often that occurs, and how those who are asymptomatic can be identified and quarantined. For their recent report on SARS-CoV-2 transmission, see the July 9, 2020 publication from WHO titled "Transmission of SARS-CoV-2": Implications for Infection Prevention Precautions.

On July 9, Starbucks announced it would require all patrons to wear face coverings in all its locations. This measure designed to decrease the spread of coronavirus takes effect on July 15, 2020. They report customers will still be able to use drive-thru and curbside pickup, or get an order delivered as before. As more companies take a stand to protect their staff and customers' health, it becomes easier to flatten the curve and protect lives nationwide. I encourage all businesses, local, state, and national, to follow this excellent example.

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