

## A message from the Health Director

**Denise Ross**

I understand Holiday traditions and gatherings are important for families and this community and I want families and friends to be able to be together and embrace the Holidays. Being vaccinated is the safest way to protect yourself and those around you, especially those who are not eligible to get vaccinated such as young children. If you or someone in your family/friend is not fully vaccinated against COVID-19, you should consider the risks of gathering. Limiting your in-person gatherings will help protect you and your unvaccinated loved ones from becoming seriously ill.

If you do gather with your friends and family please consider having unvaccinated individuals wear a mask for their protection, wash hands regularly and avoid hugging, kissing, sharing beverages and utensils, etc.

With the emergence of highly contagious variants, face masks and staying 6 feet apart remain an important tool in preventing transmission of the COVID-19 virus. The virus spreads mainly from person to person through respiratory droplets when infected people, many of whom do not exhibit COVID-19 symptoms, cough, sneeze, or talk.

### **Recommended safety practices:**

- **Wear Masks:** If you're gathering indoors with people outside of your household, it's recommended that everyone wear face coverings who are not fully vaccinated.
- **Wash hands:** If there is no access to a sink provide hand sanitizer.
- **Distance:** Where possible stay 6 feet apart.
- **Open Windows:** Keep windows open in rooms where people will gather to allow proper ventilation.
- **Clean:** Disinfect frequently shared surfaces before, during and after your gathering.

During the Holiday closure of the Wellness Center if you have COVID symptoms you need to stay home and isolate away from others in your home the best you can and wear a mask. There are home kits at the local pharmacies to test for COVID. If you are exposed as a close contact by a COVID positive person and are unvaccinated you need to quarantine away from others for 10 days and test if you develop symptoms. If you are vaccinated you do not have to quarantine but you still need to be cautious and watch for symptoms and test if you develop symptoms.

Should there be an outbreak during or after the Holidays, myself and some other staff from the Wellness Center will make ourselves available to come to the Wellness Center and do COVID testing during the closure.

**MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR!**