



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 23, 2020

New COVID-19 cases in Garland County stabilize

HOT SPRINGS – Representatives with the Hot Springs/Garland County COVID-19 Task Force were pleased to report that following the previous week's rise in new cases, the number of active cases has stabilized for our area.

Garland County Health Officer Dr. Gene Shelby shared updated statistics at the June 22 virtual meeting of the task force. There were 15 new positive cases reported from June 14-21, which is down from the previous week's new case count of 26. At the time of the meeting, there were 25 active cases in Garland County and eight additional individuals the Arkansas Department of Health is keeping track of as contacts to someone who has tested positive. Of the 33 active cases and contacts, one is in Hot Springs Village, one in Percy, one in Royal, and the remaining are in Hot Springs. Also, more than 54% of the 33 are from individuals 44 years of age or younger. "These are the age groups that are out there being active," said Shelby. "We need to keep doing the robust testing, physical distancing and wearing of face masks."

Shelby said that testing numbers have gone back up in the county, with 567 tests being done in the past week, and that the positivity rate has dropped back down from 4.2% to 2.6%, which is closer to what the county had been running over the past couple of months.

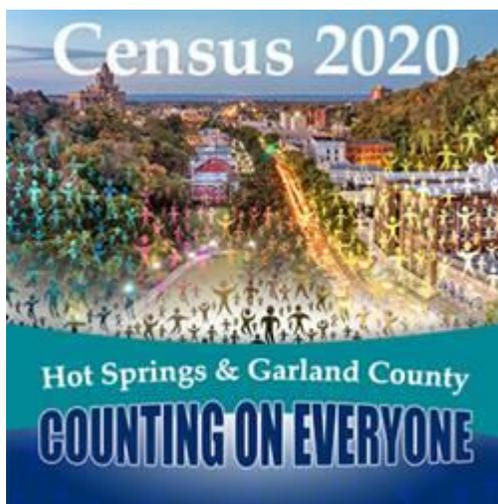
Susan Lester, administrator of the Garland County Health Unit, said they performed around 30 COVID-19 tests last week. She and Shelby said that the local health unit at 1425 Malvern Avenue has capacity to complete more tests weekly. They added that with the process being easy, the use of the less-invasive swabs and the fact that it's done at no cost, they hope anyone concerned or symptomatic will take advantage and get tested. For the full list of Garland County test sites, visit www.cityhs.net/covid-19.

Lester shared COVID-19 statewide hotline numbers with the group, including the general COVID-19 question line: 800-803-7847; the after-hours question line: 501-661-2428; the number to report complaints about COVID-19 directives not being followed: 501-661-2171; and the number for immediate quarantine or isolation needs for those experiencing homelessness or that are displaced: 501-661-2137.

She also shared her appreciation for those involved with providing a new tent for their outdoor COVID-19 testing area, following the first tent being destroyed by a storm, as well as for the high-powered fans to keep the nursing staff cool. She thanked Bo Robertson, Garland County Emergency Management director, for the tent and for helping put it up, and the Hot Springs Airport and Fire departments for loaning the fans.

Sarah Fowler of the United Way of the Ouachitas (UWO) said that they are still working hard with UWO partner agencies and other groups in the area trying to meet the needs of those affected in our community. The application for individuals and families who have suffered loss of employment or income as a result of COVID-19 is online at <https://www.unitedwayouachitas.org/covid-19-application>. Applicants can choose assistance in several categories, including food, rent, utility bills, medical/prescription costs and costs for gas or public transportation. They are also still providing free income tax preparation assistance by appointment.

To donate to the COVID-19 Relief Fund, visit www.bit.ly/UWO-COVID, call 501-623-2505 or send a check by mail at 233 Hobson Avenue, Hot Springs, AR 71913.



[Hot Springs and Garland County are counting on everyone](#) so the appropriate amount of federal funds will be allocated to support our area schools, hospitals, roads, food programs, CDBG initiatives, and other priorities.