

# Paynesville contacts confirmed COVID case

*No official confirmation, but sick visitor tests positive*

By Michael Jacobson

*(Editor's Note: I have heard rumors of other confirmed COVID-19 cases locally, but I was able to reach this family, which had contact with the novel coronavirus on Friday, May 1. For medical privacy, official sources do not list COVID-19 cases any lower than the county level, so there is no "official" way to confirm COVID-19 in Paynesville. This Paynesville family was willing to share their story (anonymously) to educate their friends and their neighbors.)*

COVID-19 cases in Stearns County have exploded over the past three weeks. Over the past three weeks, confirmed cases have increased from 17 (on Monday, April 20) to 55 (on Monday, April 27), to 728 on Monday, May 4). As of Wednesday, May 6, there are now 975 confirmed COVID-19 cases in Stearns County.

Due to medical privacy, novel coronavirus data is not

publicly listed lower than the county level, but Paynesville has had a known exposure.

"You don't think it's possible," said a Paynesville woman, who was visited by her husband on Friday, May 1. "He was here. We had very short contact with him."

Her husband, who does not live in Paynesville, had a bad "cold." "He had a sickness like this years ago. High fever, sore throat, body aches, identical," she said. "On the safe side, I tried not to be around him."

When he left, she wiped down the house with bleach.

The dad received a positive COVID-19 test confirmation on Monday, May 4. Mother and son in Paynesville now face a 14-day quarantine from their exposure to him on Friday, May 1.

"We've been great," she added, though her teenage son has a cold. "Just being on the safe side. You don't know."

"I don't think I have it. I feel fine," said her son, whose test result should be back by Saturday, May 9.

"I'm not scared or anything. I just want to be safe. I want my friends to be safe," he added.

His dad is doing fine. "It's like a bad cold and headache.

And he rests a lot," the son explained. They have no idea how his dad was exposed to COVID-19.

"He is kind of the same. It's like he has a really bad cold. He has a fever and body aches. He's tired," she added. The father does not have shortness of breath or any respiratory symptoms so far.

She works in health care, so she was taking precautions for COVID-19 at home. She was a "paranoid freak" about it, in her words. "I knew it was real. I have been careful."

Remember to wash your hands, to be careful what you touch, to never touch your face, and to be cautious.

"There are people who don't have symptoms who still carry the disease," she said.

Being in a 14-day quarantine is worse than shelter-in-place. "You can't go anywhere. It's difficult," she said. "Friends have to go shopping for you. It sucks, actually."

Her son is playing video games all day, but is looking forward to getting back to normal. "I miss going out and stuff, but it's better to stay home and stay safe," he said.

## Got Symptoms? Call hotline for screening, testing

Stearns County Public Health sent this message to Bulldog families on Tuesday, May 5:

"Stearns County is currently seeing a large increase in the number of residents testing positive for COVID-19 (or novel coronavirus). If you are experiencing any of these symptoms – fever, cough, shortness of breath, chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, or new loss of taste or smell – we encourage you to contact your health care provider or call the CentraCare Connect Hotline at 320-200-3200 for screening and possible testing. The ability to do more testing and isolate sick individuals helps public health in its efforts to contain COVID-19.

"If you have other questions, you can contact the Benton-Stearns COVID-19 hotline at 877-782-5683.

"Please continue to practice good hand hygiene, stay home if you are sick, maintain 6 feet from others while out in public, and stay away from crowds."