Antibody Study and Testing Begins in Blaine County

KETCHUM, Idaho – The Ketchum Fire Department and Blaine County Ambulance District have partnered with the Albany College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences, and the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center to conduct a study that includes antibody testing for residents of Blaine County.

The study will start with a random sample of 400 Blaine County residents to determine the prevalence of COVID-19 antibodies in symptomatic and asymptomatic individuals to determine how many asymptomatic, or silent, cases there are in the community.

Officials emphasize this is a study; not a medical diagnosis, vaccine or guarantee of immunity to COVID-19.

Initially, the study will analyze the total number of COVID-19 cases in the sample group compared to the number of cases tested. This information will help further the fight against COVID-19 to help scientists slow or stop the disease. It will also help discover if antibody presence confers immunity.

Blaine County residents wishing to participate in the study, including the testing, may register at https://redcap.acphs.edu/surveys/?s=3MDMEDTX4L. Residents will be screened and chosen for the study based on demographic criteria established for the study.

Eventually, the study will provide information to the community on when it is safe to resume normal activity.

“We are grateful for the efforts led by Ketchum Fire Chief Bill McLaughlin and Blaine County EMS Director Terry O’Connor to spearhead this study,” said Mayor Neil Bradshaw. “A keen interest from the partnering organizations and the perseverance of our Chief and EMS Director kept the ball rolling and made the testing a reality for our community.”

Further analysis of the study will help to:

• Determine whether there are indicators for predicting a mild or severe reaction to COVID-19
• Determine the transmissibility of the virus
• Predict the duration of a COVID-19 outbreak and whether herd immunity can be reached in a community
• Develop vaccines for COVID-19
• Determine if there is a correlation between certain classes of blood pressure medication and severity of illness
“I am proud of the collaboration between Blaine County and our cities,” said Blaine County Commissioner Jacob Greenberg. “Not only will this testing in the County help the study, it is a chance for the volunteers to help friends, relatives, neighbors and ultimately, all of humanity.”

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**About the City of Ketchum**

The City of Ketchum is located in the Wood River Valley in south central Idaho. Founded in 1880 during the mining boom, Ketchum is now regarded as one of the most popular destinations for winter and summer visitors due to its world-class skiing, mountain biking, fishing, hiking, restaurants, art galleries and shopping. In 2018, Ketchum was awarded designation by the International Dark-Sky Association as a Dark Sky Community and is included in the Nation’s first International Dark Sky Reserve, one of only 13 in the world. The City of Ketchum hosts the famous annual Wagon Days Parade, held on Labor Day weekend, and numerous other year-round attractions. Ketchum is home to more than 10,000 full- and part-time residents. For more information about the City of Ketchum, visit [www.ketchumidaho.org](http://www.ketchumidaho.org).