FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

COVID-19: Hurry Up and Wait
By Dr. Michele Dikkers, Chair of Clayton County Board of Health

Hurry up and wait.
We all know what that is like.
Hurry to the airport to get checked in on time and then wait in line to get through security. Push your way through the crowd to the parking lot, and then get stuck in traffic. Running late to an appointment and then have to wait 30 minutes for the doctor.
UGGGHHH...we hate it. But in the end, it is worth it.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, hurry up and wait seems to have been a bit of a theme. As we watched this new disease grow in China, we waited to see if it would arrive in the States.

Once it arrived, we watched to see how it would spread.
We hurried to develop plans on how to manage the possibility of an influx of patients. How many could we treat, where would we put an excess number of patients if we had to?
We developed plans for staffing. Crammed to learn all we could from others that were treating this new disease that was like nothing the medical world had ever seen.
And we waited.

We watched what was happening in New York and Italy and anywhere that was being overwhelmed with patients, knowing we could learn from them.

Then we waited.
We continued to plan and learn. And we waited for COVID-19 to arrive in Iowa. And it did.
We cared for patients with the tools that we had and waited for treatments to come. And they did...dexamethasone, remdesivir and convalescent plasma.
We've been waiting for vaccines, and now they are here!

We have been hurrying up and waiting again. Staff at public health and local medical facilities have been meeting for weeks, going through multiple scenarios of how, who, where and when to administer vaccines. Multiple meetings weekly have been occurring. Finalization of plans have been held up awaiting direction from the state as to who can be vaccinated, when and how many vaccines are available to each county.
The preparation has been worth it. Each time a call comes down from public health giving the next direction, they have been ready.

Last week the state gave the go ahead to start vaccinating those 65 years and older, as well as other essential workers in a step-wise fashion. Now we wait for vaccine.

As providers in Clayton County, our goal is to vaccinate as many people as we can, as soon as we can. The limiting factor at this time is the availability of the vaccine.

So, we will hurry up and wait.

We will hurry up and plan vaccination clinics, and then wait for vaccines.

So, be patient. Know that as soon as we have supplies, we will vaccinate. If you have signed up on a wait list, trust you will be contacted when clinics can be scheduled. Due to packaging and the limited doses, vaccination will be by appointment only. Appointments will be made as vaccine is available.

It will happen. It is happening.

In the meantime, even if you have been vaccinated, remember to Wear a mask, Wash your hands and Watch your distance.

Be patient as we hurry up and wait.

Be safe, Be well and Be kind, because to quote a friend, “It truly is the right thing to do.”