

News Release

For immediate release

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Arrowhead Public Health Departments launch #thankyouwithblue initiative to thank frontline workers

Public health staff from 11 county and tribal public health departments are again partnering on Project Blue Light to honor frontline workers who have been working to keep communities safe during the COVID-19 pandemic.

During the week of Jan. 24-31, businesses and individuals are asked to light up the exterior of their home or business blue with a blue lightbulb or string lights as a show of support and thanks. Project Blue Light is coordinated by public health staff from Aitkin, Carlton, Cook, Itasca, Koochiching, Lake, and St. Louis County along with Bois Forte, Fond du Lac, Grand Portage and Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe. This is the second year for this effort, which began as a way to thank those whose jobs required them to continue working in public settings while many others were able to shift to the safety of working from home.

Everyone is burned out on COVID-19 — talking about it, hearing about it, navigating the challenges it brings. There are passionate views surrounding COVID-19 — whether to mask or not mask, vaccinate or not vaccinate. Regardless of your personal view on COVID-19 mitigation strategies, there is an opportunity to come together to offer support and compassion once again to our frontline workers who continue to give their all to serve their community. Many of those frontline workers are struggling with COVID-19 fatigue, caretaker fatigue, moral fatigue, along with physical and mental fatigue. A simple blue light turned on as a sign of appreciation can mean so much to a frontline worker driving home after a hard day and might help them feel like they are not alone.

Across the Arrowhead region, landmarks, businesses, and front porches will be illuminated for Project Blue Light. In addition, employers and schools are encouraged to designate a day of the week for everyone to wear blue. Businesses are encouraged to display signs or banners, and residents are encouraged to hang a poster in a window to honor all our frontline workers. Everyone is urged to share a photo of how they are participating with the hashtag #thankyouwithblue on social media.

Frontline workers have kept essential services operating during the pandemic, minimizing disruption to daily lives. They continue to play a critical role in protecting our communities' health and safety.

"This pandemic has been a challenge to healthcare and public safety workers who have worked tirelessly over the past two years, and their ongoing sacrifices are worthy of our gratitude," said Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe Chief Executive Melanie Benjamin. "But we also need to recognize the many everyday Minnesotans without whom our quality of life would also suffer — people who work in our grocery stores and restaurants, in schools and childcare settings; people who deliver mail and packages or distribute food and other supplies. These and other hardworking people who support our life, health, and safety, deserve our recognition and appreciation as well."

Please join this region-wide effort to turn the Arrowhead blue and say #thankyouwithblue.

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