



Laura Belin <laurarbelin@bleedingheartland.com>

Q about strike teams sent to workplaces

Ekstrand, Sarah <sarah.ekstrand@idph.iowa.gov>
To: Laura Belin <laurarbelin@bleedingheartland.com>

Mon, Jan 25, 2021 at 4:57 PM

Hi Laura,

I checked back with our team and the only update to the list I shared is:

Tama County testing date should be changed to April 22-23. The May 12 entry for Tama County was an error. The rest of the list, as well as the subsequent updates I shared are valid.

Thank you,
Sarah Ekstrand
Public Information Officer, Iowa Department of Public Health
515.401.7988
321 E. 12th Street Des Moines, IA 50319
sarah.ekstrand@idph.iowa.gov



On Sun, Jan 24, 2021 at 9:37 AM Laura Belin <laurarbelin@bleedingheartland.com> wrote:
Sounds good. I will update my post tomorrow with whatever additional information you send.

<https://www.bleedingheartland.com/2021/01/24/exclusive-governor-fast-tracked-covid-tests-for-firm-linked-to-major-donor/>

On Sun, Jan 24, 2021 at 8:12 AM Ekstrand, Sarah <sarah.ekstrand@idph.iowa.gov> wrote:
I totally understand. And I will have the final and complete list for you tomorrow.

Thank you,
Sarah Ekstrand
Public Information Officer, Iowa Department of Public Health
515.401.7988
321 E. 12th Street Des Moines, IA 50319
sarah.ekstrand@idph.iowa.gov



On Fri, Jan 22, 2021 at 4:05 PM Laura Belin <laurarbelin@bleedingheartland.com> wrote:

OK, just let me know if you can clarify.

It's hard to understand why it has been so difficult to get accurate and complete information about this program. We're not talking about a catalog of hundreds of strike team visits. It seems to have involved fewer than two dozen strike teams over a period of less than two months.

On Fri, Jan 22, 2021 at 10:48 AM Ekstrand, Sarah <sarah.ekstrand@idph.iowa.gov> wrote:

Hi Laura,

Sorry for the delay in responding. I have our team checking in on this, I know they are busy coordinating vaccine response, but I'm hoping to get this resolved quickly.

Thank you,
Sarah Ekstrand
Public Information Officer, Iowa Department of Public Health
515.401.7988
321 E. 12th Street Des Moines, IA 50319
sarah.ekstrand@idph.iowa.gov



On Wed, Jan 20, 2021 at 3:46 PM Laura Belin <laurarbelin@bleedingheartland.com> wrote:

Sarah, correcting this list as I already knew GMT is the business that had the strike team visit on May 22.

April 23: Tyson in Perry (Dallas County)
April 24: Tyson in Waterloo
April 29-30: testing long-term care workers (but no residents?) in Muscatine County
May 5: unspecified business
May 4-5: Perdue facilities in Woodbury and Sioux counties
May 5-6: Long-term care workers (but no residents?) in Pottawattamie County
May 8: unspecified business
May 8-9: Long-term care workers (but no residents?) in Dallas County
May 12: Long-term care workers (but no residents?) in Tama County
May 20-21: Long-term care workers (but no residents?) in Cerro Gordo County
May 22: GMT in Waverly
May 27: Long-term care workers (but no residents?) in Bremer County
May 29: unspecified business
June 4: unspecified business
June 5: unspecified business

Please confirm that this list represents all strike team visits involving IDPH and Iowa National Guard personnel.

On Wed, Jan 20, 2021 at 3:32 PM Laura Belin <laurarbelin@bleedingheartland.com> wrote:

Ok, just to make sure I understand: is this the complete list of Iowa strike team visits with IDPH and Iowa National Guard involvement?

April 23: Tyson in Perry (Dallas County)
April 24: Tyson in Waterloo

April 29-30: testing long-term care workers (but no residents?) in Muscatine County
May 5: unspecified business
May 4-5: Perdue facilities in Woodbury and Sioux counties
May 5-6: Long-term care workers (but no residents?) in Pottawattamie County
May 8: unspecified business
May 8-9: Long-term care workers (but no residents?) in Dallas County
May 12: Long-term care workers (but no residents?) in Tama County
May 20-21: Long-term care workers (but no residents?) in Cerro Gordo County
May 22: unspecified business
May 27: Long-term care workers (but no residents?) in Bremer County
May 29: unspecified business
June 4: unspecified business
June 5: unspecified business

Please confirm my understanding that this represents a complete list of sites where "strike teams" involving the IDPH and Iowa National Guard conducted COVID-19 testing, and that there were no strike team visits after June 5.

I understand that the IDPH also provided test kits for a number of other businesses, which had arranged for local public health staff or others to administer the tests.

Laura

On Wed, Jan 20, 2021 at 11:31 AM Ekstrand, Sarah <sarah.ekstrand@idph.iowa.gov> wrote:

The sites with no dates were locations that indicated they needed testing, then, secured their own testing either through local public health or a private testing group. In retrospect, I should have removed those rows that we did not have dates for, I understand how this would cause confusion.

Thank you,
Sarah Ekstrand
Public Information Officer, Iowa Department of Public Health
321 E. 12th Street Des Moines, IA 50319
sarah.ekstrand@idph.iowa.gov



On Wed, Jan 20, 2021 at 10:53 AM Laura Belin <laurarbelin@bleedingheartland.com> wrote:

Sarah, I'm confused. I was specifically asking about strike teams that had Iowa National Guard involvement, such as the testing at GMT on May 22.

How many of those were there, and when did they occur? I am trying to get a sense of how long the "strike team" program existed and how many workplaces and long-term care facilities benefited from that approach to COVID-19 testing.

You had previously written on January 12, "I am attaching a redacted version of the strike team calendar. Names of businesses are redacted pursuant to Iowa Code section 139A.3(2)(c)." Now you are saying that list included businesses that did COVID-19 testing with "no state staff or assets deployed," so you have no documentation of the dates for six of the businesses visited.

How can IDPH not be aware of when businesses conducted their own mass COVID-19 testing?

Why were those testing events included on the document you sent me on January 12, if they didn't involve strike teams?

Laura

On Wed, Jan 20, 2021 at 10:11 AM Ekstrand, Sarah <sarah.ekstrand@idph.iowa.gov> wrote:

Hi Laura,

There were no state staff or assets deployed to those sites. IDPH was not involved in the testing at those sites so we don't have date documentation.

Thank you,
Sarah Ekstrand
Public Information Officer, Iowa Department of Public Health
321 E. 12th Street Des Moines, IA 50319
sarah.ekstrand@idph.iowa.gov



On Tue, Jan 19, 2021 at 7:51 PM Laura Belin <laurabelin@bleedingheartland.com> wrote:

Hello Sarah,

When you say "the others were conducted by private companies or county public health departments," do you mean there was no Iowa National Guard involvement?

And are you telling me the IDPH has no record of when these strike team testing events occurred? Or are you claiming you can withhold the dates because county public health or private companies administered the COVID-19 tests? If so, on what grounds are you withholding the dates?

I see nothing in Iowa Code Chapter 22 that allows IDPH to withhold the dates on which employees in congregate workplaces were tested for COVID-19. I'm also not convinced the open records law allows you to withhold the names of the businesses.

Laura

On Tue, Jan 19, 2021 at 7:11 PM Ekstrand, Sarah <sarah.ekstrand@idph.iowa.gov> wrote:

Hi Laura,

The Bremer County LTC happened on May 28 and 29. The others were conducted by private companies or county public health departments.

Thank you,
Sarah Ekstrand
Public Information Officer, Iowa Department of Public Health
321 E. 12th Street Des Moines, IA 50319
sarah.ekstrand@idph.iowa.gov



On Tue, Jan 19, 2021 at 9:35 AM Laura Belin <laurarbelin@bleedingheartland.com> wrote:
Hello Sarah,

I hope you had a good weekend. I am circling back to confirm the dates of the last six strike team visits. Please send me this information by the close of business today.

Laura

On Wed, Jan 13, 2021 at 4:22 PM Ekstrand, Sarah <sarah.ekstrand@idph.iowa.gov> wrote:

I am checking with the team.

Thank you,
Sarah Ekstrand
Public Information Officer, Iowa Department of Public Health
321 E. 12th Street Des Moines, IA 50319
sarah.ekstrand@idph.iowa.gov



On Wed, Jan 13, 2021 at 3:58 PM Laura Belin <laurarbelin@bleedingheartland.com> wrote:

Circling back on this. On what dates did the last six strike team visits (one long-term care and six at business workplaces) occur?

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Laura Belin** <laurarbelin@bleedingheartland.com>
Date: Tue, Jan 12, 2021 at 4:38 PM
Subject: Re: Q about strike teams sent to workplaces
To: Ekstrand, Sarah <sarah.ekstrand@idph.iowa.gov>

Sarah, thanks for clarifying. Just to make sure I understand: this is the complete list of strike team visits? Fourteen for businesses and six for long-term care staff and/or residents?

There is no date next to the bottom six--did all of those happen on June 5?

Thanks for letting me know.

Laura

On Tue, Jan 12, 2021 at 4:30 PM Ekstrand, Sarah <sarah.ekstrand@idph.iowa.gov> wrote:

Laura,

We are not refusing to fulfill your request and I can assure you that we are working through getting your records request as soon as possible. I am attaching a redacted version of the strike team calendar. Names of businesses are redacted pursuant to Iowa Code section 139A.3(2)(c).

Sarah Ekstrand
Public Information Officer, Iowa Department of Public Health
321 E. 12th Street Des Moines, IA 50319
sarah.ekstrand@idph.iowa.gov



On Tue, Jan 12, 2021 at 2:44 PM Laura Belin <laurarbelin@bleedingheartland.com> wrote:

Sarah, I need an answer from you about what is going on.

If IDPH is refusing to provide a list of locations that received strike team visits, with the dates of each visit, I am seeking comment on why that information is being withheld.

If IDPH will provide a list of strike team visits with dates and locations, I need to know when I can expect that information. You said last week that you were close to being able to provide answers to my questions. You should be able to send the list before the Open Records team has completed its review of the emails I've requested with the revised search terms ("GMT" and "Waverly," etc.).

Thank you in advance for clarifying.

Laura

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Laura Belin** <laurarbelin@bleedingheartland.com>
Date: Mon, Jan 11, 2021 at 7:38 PM
Subject: Re: Q about strike teams sent to workplaces
To: Ekstrand, Sarah <sarah.ekstrand@idph.iowa.gov>

Hello Sarah,

On January 6, you indicated you were close to issuing the records request that would answer these questions.

When can I expect either the documents or answers from you? I don't understand why it has taken so long for IDPH to provide a list of counties/long term care facilities or workplaces that received strike team visits, with dates. It's not as if there were hundreds of these.

Laura

On Fri, Jan 8, 2021 at 12:43 PM Ekstrand, Sarah
<sarah.ekstrand@idph.iowa.gov> wrote:

Hi Laura,

Not at all intending to string you along, just wanting to not duplicate work that is being done for your records request as it seems that the questions you've sent me are the same as the contents of the records request.

Thank you,
Sarah Ekstrand
Public Information Officer, Iowa Department of Public Health
321 E. 12th Street Des Moines, IA 50319
sarah.ekstrand@idph.iowa.gov



On Fri, Jan 8, 2021 at 8:59 AM Laura Belin <laurarbelin@bleedingheartland.com> wrote:

Sarah, where are we on this? I am trying to give you every opportunity to respond, but it feels like you are stringing me along.

When can I expect answers and/or public records addressing these questions?

Laura

On Wed, Jan 6, 2021 at 4:29 PM Laura Belin <laurarbelin@bleedingheartland.com> wrote:

Hi Sarah,

I just got home and got your message. Did you need anything else from me on this? I don't understand why it is difficult to provide a list of counties and workplaces that had strike team visits.

I'm trying to understand the criteria for selecting these locations.

Laura

On Wed, Jan 6, 2021 at 3:45 PM Ekstrand, Sarah
<sarah.ekstrand@idph.iowa.gov> wrote:

Hi,

I think we are getting close to being able to issue the records request that will answer most of these questions.

Thank you,
Sarah Ekstrand
Public Information Officer, Iowa Department of Public Health
321 E. 12th Street Des Moines, IA 50319

sarah.ekstrand@idph.iowa.gov



On Wed, Jan 6, 2021 at 12:44 PM Laura Belin <laurarbelin@bleedingheartland.com> wrote:

I pushed back my deadline. Hoping to get some answers today. Thanks in advance.

On Tue, Jan 5, 2021 at 5:02 PM Laura Belin <laurarbelin@bleedingheartland.com> wrote:

Hello Sarah,

Can you answer the questions tomorrow (January 6)?

Thanks,

Laura

On Tue, Jan 5, 2021 at 12:47 PM Ekstrand, Sarah <sarah.ekstrand@idph.iowa.gov> wrote:

Hi Laura,

I am working on your questions but am not going to be able to meet your deadline of close of business today.

Thank you,
Sarah Ekstrand
Public Information Officer, Iowa Department of Public Health
321 E. 12th Street Des Moines, IA 50319
sarah.ekstrand@idph.iowa.gov



On Mon, Jan 4, 2021 at 11:39 AM Laura Belin <laurarbelin@bleedingheartland.com> wrote:

Hi Sarah,

I'm circling back on this in case you missed my message last week. If you can respond by the close of business on Tuesday, January 5, that would be helpful.

Laura

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Laura Belin** <laurarbelin@bleedingheartland.com>
Date: Mon, Dec 28, 2020 at 3:47 PM
Subject: Q about strike teams sent to workplaces
To: Sarah Ekstrand <sarah.ekstrand@idph.iowa.gov>

Hello Sarah,

I'm seeking further information about manufacturing workplaces that received visits from "strike teams" involving the Iowa National Guard and/or IDPH staff.

How many Iowa food processing facilities received a strike team visit while this program was active? Please send the name of the company and the city and date of each visit.

How many Iowa manufacturers not connected to the food system received a strike team visit while this program was active? Again, please send the name of the company and the city and date of each visit.

For instance, I know a strike team visited GMT in Waverly on May 22. I know that in late April, the governor's office was in discussions with TMI Composites in Newton about a testing plan.

<https://who13.com/news/tpi-halts-production-after-dozens-of-employees-test-positive-for-covid-19/>

However, I don't know whether TMI got a strike team visit (and if so, when), or whether IDPH simply sent a few hundred COVID-19 testing kits to TMI for surveillance testing to be conducted by others.

Thanks in advance for any information you can provide.

Yours,

Laura

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<http://www.bleedingheartland.com>

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