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## Resident speaks about his experience in testing positive for COVID-19

### 8-year-old son also tests positive

By **AMANDA RASINSKI**  
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When Neil Zimmerman and his 8-year-old son felt ill for a couple of days and then discovered they had been in contact with someone who tested positive for the coronavirus, they got tested, too. The results came in three days later: positive.

"I kinda hoped I was positive because I knew I was getting better and by testing positive it shows that I pretty much defeated the virus," he said. "I kind of have mixed feelings because there's always that chance your symptoms can resurface until you completely beat it out."

Many medical facilities have reported patients doing well in their homes only to take a turn and show more severe symptoms after it had appeared patients were recovering.

Zimmerman, a 30-year-old Morrison County resident, said his initial symptoms were similar to a regular flu-like illness.

"I had a low grade fever. The highest mine got was like 100.3 and the highest my boy's got was 100.4, very low grade. Normally it would be lower during the day and

it would go up a little bit at night," he said.

With the fever, Zimmerman also noted having a slight headache, muscle aches and after a few days of symptoms, he lost his sense of smell. In the early days of their symptoms, Zimmerman said he and his son were very fatigued and slept a lot. His son also mentioned having a headache, but was impacted by symptoms less than himself.

The symptoms went on for a couple of days, he said, and by the time they were tested, the pair already started to feel better. Zimmerman opted for the drive-thru testing clinic in St. Cloud and the testing process, he said, was relatively easy.

"I just called them. I told them our symptoms and the big thing is that I was in contact with someone who also tested positive," he said.

When he and his son arrived, they were given a ticket number and reported to the appropriate drive-thru line where they met a medical provider and "they did a throat swab and then sent you on your way," he said.

The person who tested positive that Zimmerman and his son had contact with was also tested in St.

Cloud and is recovering well, he said.

That person is unsure of where they picked it up, Zimmerman said. Then added that people continue to grocery shop, go to gas stations and live their lives, so it could be from anywhere.

"We weren't fearful, but we were being cautious. We were practicing all the social distancing guidelines, limiting public shopping and all that, of course. But I still had to go to work, so we were doing what was suggested, we were staying at home with very limited public exposure," he said.

A few days after being tested, they received the positive result and were advised to quarantine for 10 days while doing their best to separate from family members. Zimmerman got the results one day after the birth of his fifth child.

"Of course the main concern was for my kids, my wife and baby," he said.

The couple had their fourth home birth, Monday, Zimmerman said, and he has taken all precautions to keep his wife and newborn from getting ill. He was glad to have a home birth during a time

**"Each person is going to be affected by the virus differently, so people shouldn't expect to only have the symptoms I had."**

—Neil Zimmerman

## Public Health updates on contact tracing, care facilities

By **AMANDA RASINSKI**  
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County commissioners revisited the prospect of taking on contact tracing efforts for the coronavirus in the area, but ultimately decided that with current conditions they would leave the process to state health officials.

Public Health Director Brad Vold said that regional sites across the state are opening to focus on contact tracing and case investigation and will be staffed by Minnesota Department of Health and local Public Health employees.

Contact tracing requires a staff member to interview a person who tested positive for COVID-19 and contact anyone that person contacted to inform them they may have been exposed to the virus and inquire about any symptoms. It is also used to determine the source of someone's infection. Those in contact with a positive patient may be asked to self isolate for a certain portion of time.

"We need 3,700 contact tracers in Minnesota to keep up with the number of people who are infected," said Vold. "I know MDH has really redeployed a lot of their

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## Bar owner's plans to open canceled after Ellison sues

By **TYLER OHMANN**  
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A local bar owner who planned to defy Governor Walz' executive order for bars and restaurants to remain closed to dine-in customers until June 1, did not open Monday.

Kris Schiffler, who owns six bars in Central Minnesota, including Shady's Golden Eagle in Burtrum and Shady's RAILSIDE in Rice, had planned to open all six locations Monday, but scaled that back to open only his Albany lo-

cation, Shady's Hometown Tavern and Event Center.

A crowd of hundreds gathered outside the establishment for the planned noon opening, but Schiffler announced that on the advice of his lawyer, that the bar and restaurant would not open as planned.

Minnesota Attorney General Keith Ellison filed a suit against Schiffler, and warned him prior to Monday that opening would result in a fine of up to \$25,000 per day, and could potentially result

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## MDVA to sponsor virtual Memorial Day program, partnering with PBS

### Local veterans organizations will hold private ceremonies to recognize the fallen

The Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs is sponsoring a virtual Memorial Day program in partnership with Twin Cities PBS-TPT. The ongoing coronavirus pandemic prohibits the live events traditionally held at the three State Veterans Cemeteries located in Little Falls, Preston and Duluth.

"The COVID-19 pandemic requires a new approach to our traditional Memorial Day events," said MDVA Commissioner Larry Herke. "This year we will mark this special day in a new and different way, but with the same goal: to honor and pay our respects to Minnesota Veterans who have passed."

TPT has created a 30-minute Memorial Day program entitled "Always Remember: A Minnesota Tribute to Veterans We've Lost," that will be broadcast across the state on TPT's Minnesota Channel at 7:30 p.m. on Monday, May 25 and on TPT2 Sunday, May 31

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Photo courtesy of Tony Wenzel

Tony Wenzel of Randall shot this photo of the veterans' graves at the Minnesota State Veterans Cemetery in Little Falls after a past Memorial Day program. This year, while a program will not be held at the cemetery due to the COVID-19 pandemic and orders not to gather in groups of more than 10 people, a virtual program has been put together and will be available for everyone to view.

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