



Mayor Brindle's COVID-19 Update <date>



The Department of Health reports 59 new cases of COVID-19 from February 1-5. While we normally report these numbers on a weekly basis, this past Tuesday's report for the full month of January included the numbers from last Friday through Sunday (January 29-31, which totaled 21 cases).

Of the 59 new cases reported:

- 15 were diagnosed in previous months but reported this week
- 15 are still under investigation
- 13 had with no known exposure
- 7 were unable to be reached
- 5 had a positive household contact
- 3 were related to youth sports
- 1 had a known exposure

The ages of this week's cases ranged from 4 to 96 years old, broken down as follows:

- Age 9 and under: 5 cases
- Age 10-19: 16 cases
- Age 20-29: 6 cases
- Age 30-39: 9 cases
- Age 40-49: 10 cases
- Age 50-59: 7 cases
- Age 60-69: 3 cases
- Age 70-79: 1 case
- Age 80-89: 1 case
- Age 90 and above: 1 case

Regional Health Officer Megan Avallone reports that Westfield, like the rest of New Jersey, continues to show a high level of activity. The most highly impacted age group remains between 10 and 19 this week, representing 27% of the newly reported cases.

The State's numbers are finally trending positive with a seven-day average for new confirmed cases down 28% from a week ago and down 30% from a month ago, representing the lowest level since November 14. The statewide rate of transmission dropped slightly to .92, down from .94 on Thursday. In terms of vaccinations, as of Friday, more than 925,000 doses have been administered in New Jersey.

On Wednesday, Governor Murphy issued an Executive Order, effective this morning, increasing indoor capacity limits from 25 percent to 35 percent for food or beverage establishments (restaurants, cafeterias, private non-profit clubs, and food courts, and bars), entertainment and recreational businesses (casinos and gyms), and personal care services (including barber shops and nail salons). The Executive Order also lifts the 10:00PM curfew for in-person indoor restaurant service, although the prohibition on seating at indoor bar areas remains in effect.

In addition, religious ceremonies or services, political activities, wedding ceremonies, funerals, and memorial services that are currently limited to 25 percent of the room's capacity up to 150 people will now be limited to 35 percent of the room's capacity up to 150 people. Performances at entertainment centers (movie theaters, performing arts centers, and concert venues), will also be capped at 35 percent up to a maximum of 150 people. The Governor attributed the changes to the downward trend of COVID-19 cases in New Jersey's hospitals and the state's decreasing rate of transmission. He also signed legislation that will extend the effective period of permits issued to allow bars and restaurants to utilize outdoor spaces or public sidewalks as extensions of their businesses premises.

The Union County Board of County Commissioners has opened a COVID-19 Vaccination Call Center to better assist seniors, as well as those who may not have internet access, with scheduling a vaccination appointment. The call center will also work to answer questions from residents who need more information regarding the COVID-19 vaccine, and can also help arrange transportation if necessary for residents with a confirmed vaccination appointment. The phone number is 908-613-7VAX (7829), and the hours of operation are Monday-Friday, 9:00AM to 7:00PM, and Saturdays from 9:00AM to 1:00PM.

As you can see, although COVID activity remains high both locally and across the state, we are seeing trends moving in the right direction. This is the result of the ongoing diligence within the community to take the necessary precautions that help slow the spread of the virus. Please continue to do your part during these critical winter months, and know that we have brighter days ahead.