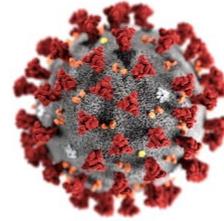




Mayor Brindle's COVID-19 Update March 19, 2020



CONFIRMED CASES

As of today, there are 742 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in New Jersey (up from 427 yesterday), 33 of which are in Union County. These include three additional cases in Westfield -- all males, ages 59, 44, and 40 (this resident has also asked to self-report as handsome in his public description). Each of these residents is in stable condition and managing symptoms at home.

I know that many of you read my post last night from another resident who has tested positive, and I am so grateful to him for candidly sharing the details of his symptoms and efforts to be tested. He is not included in the numbers I'm providing today because our Board of Health has not yet been notified by the State. I point this out only to minimize confusion about the numbers going forward. As testing begins to expand, there will be instances where residents receive confirmation of their diagnosis before it arrives to us through official channels. I will continue to report the numbers that the Board of Health receives daily, which places the total for Westfield at seven cases officially -- although it's safe to assume there are quite a few more in actuality.

STATE UPDATES

Today, the Governor ordered the closure of all personal-care businesses and social clubs, effective at 8:00PM tonight, which cannot comply with social distancing guidelines -- including barber shops, hair salons, spas, nail and eyelash salons, tattoo parlors, cosmetology shops, electrology facilities, spas (including day spas and medical spas, at which solely elective and cosmetic medical procedures are performed), massage parlors, tanning salons, and public and private social clubs. Health facilities that provide medically necessary or therapeutic services are exempt from this directive.

Beginning Friday, March 20, a COVID-19 community-based testing site will be open at Bergen Community College in Paramus. To be eligible for testing, individuals must be current NJ residents who are experiencing symptoms of respiratory illness. Priority will be given to symptomatic individuals experiencing cough, fever (99.6F or above), and shortness of breath. This drive-thru testing center will be open seven days per week, from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM. Testing is free and will be covered by the federal government or personal insurance companies. Individuals are encouraged to bring insurance cards if they have one.

NJ 211 has been activated to help handle COVID-19 related calls from New Jersey residents. All residents with questions or concerns about COVID-19 and resources available to them can call 2-1-1. NJ 211 is New Jersey's statewide, comprehensive, information and referral service operated by United Ways of New Jersey. Residents can also text NJCOVID to 898-211 to receive text information and stay informed. To receive live text assistance, residents can text their zip code to 898-211.

LOCAL UPDATES

Today, the Westfield Police Department began making documented compliance checks of every restaurant in Town to ensure adherence with directives set forth in the Governor's order. Each restaurant will be checked at least once a day by our Community Service Officers to determine that no patrons are seated/being served within the establishment, and that all take-out orders are being delivered or offered at curbside for pick-up.

In addition, the Community Service Officers will conduct documented park checks to ensure that residents are practicing responsible social distancing for the benefit of public health. Any observed organized, or quasi-organized activities, will be broken up by the police. Please adhere to social distancing guidelines so our police force can focus their resources on emergencies and community assistance during this difficult time. I do not want to close our parks, as I think their benefit is tremendous for all of us right now -- but I will only continue to keep them open as long as their benefit outweighs their risk. Please do your part to flatten the curve.

As a reminder, the Conservation Center is closed, as it always is at this time of year for the DPW to make seasonal preparations prior to what is typically an April opening. We will re-assess the opening date in the coming weeks and communicate updates to everyone.

Be sure to follow our Virtual Recreation Department on Facebook (@WestfieldRecreation) as they launch online programming for the community -- including craft demonstrations, classes, and photo contests. They are kicking off their efforts with a holiday lighting contest, inspired by other communities that have encouraged their residents to spread cheer in this way. More details to follow in the coming days.

BUSINESS COMMUNITY

The U.S. Small Business Administration approved Governor Murphy's application for assistance and will now offer low-interest federal disaster loans for working capital up to \$2 million to New Jersey small businesses suffering substantial economic injury as a result of the COVID-19. Applicants may apply online, receive additional disaster assistance information, and download applications at: <https://disasterloan.sba.gov/ela>. Applicants may also call SBA's Customer Service Center at (800) 659-2955 or email disastercustomerservice@sba.gov for more information on SBA disaster assistance.

I have appointed Councilwoman Dawn Mackey and Councilman Scott Katz to lead our Town's business recovery efforts in their capacities as DWC and Chamber liaisons, respectively, in collaboration with both of those organizations.

Councilwoman Linda Habgood and Councilman Mark Parmelee, as chair and vice chair of the Town Council Finance Committee, will be leading our efforts with the Westfield United Fund to set up a dedicated fund to offer relief to our businesses and service employees impacted by this pandemic.

Finally, please join me tomorrow at 2:00PM on my Facebook page for a special surprise guest to help us end the week on a bright note. See you there!

All the best to everyone for ongoing good health.