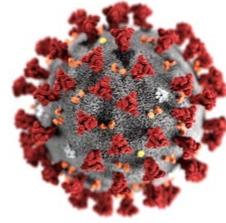




Mayor Brindle's COVID-19 Update March 27, 2020



CONFIRMED CASES

As of today, there are 8,825 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in New Jersey. These include two additional cases in Westfield -- a 65 year old female and 49 year old male -- both are managing symptoms at home. This brings the official count from the Board of Health to 28 cases. For a more detailed breakdown of statewide numbers, visit the [NJ Department of Health COVID-19 Dashboard](#).

Going forward, the number of cases will not be reported daily to each of the eight municipalities within the Westfield Regional Health Department. Between the lag time with test results, as well as the time required to complete the confirmation of each positive result, the strain on our Health Department resources is unsustainable for daily reporting. As you know, the official case count is not ever a complete picture because of the many pending results awaiting verification. I anticipate the actual cases to be a

significant multiplier over what's reported. Please assume everyone is contagious and behave like it with vigilant social distancing measures.

FEDERAL AND STATE UPDATES

- Today, Governor Murphy put out a call for volunteers with qualified medical training and experience who wish to assist in the fight against COVID-19. Retired nurses or doctors, nursing and medical students, EMTs, former members of our Armed Services' medical corps – if you have the training and are able to help, please go to covid19.nj.gov/volunteer to sign up.
- The State is continuing to work with the Level 1 hospital system and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to set up three medical field stations – at the Meadowlands Convention Center in Secaucus, the New Jersey Convention Center in Edison, and the Atlantic City Convention Center.
- Today, the New Jersey Supreme Court ordered an extension of the suspension of court proceedings through April 27.
- Many New Jersey residents who receive food assistance through the NJ Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (NJ SNAP) will receive an extra benefit payment on Sunday and their benefits will be higher in April to help address critical food needs related to the COVID-19 pandemic. SNAP supplemental payments were included in the federal Families First Coronavirus Response Act. A total of \$70 million in extra NJ SNAP benefits will be provided over the next two months to New Jerseyans to help with the purchase of groceries.
- The Union County COVID-19 Testing Center will be open tomorrow, March 28, from 9:00AM to 2:00PM for County residents who have received a prescription from their health care provider to be tested. Also on Saturday, both the Bergen Community College and PNC Bank Arts Center drive-through sites will be reserved for symptomatic health care workers and first responders with valid credentials ONLY. On Sunday, only Bergen Community College will be open. They will be able to test 500 people starting at 8:00AM. On Monday, only PNC Bank Arts Center will be open, again at 8:00AM for 500 tests.

LOCAL UPDATES

Did you see John Rzeznik this morning on Live with Kelly and Ryan? He spoke about the character of Downtown Westfield and what makes it special, the need to help independent business owners, and the We Love Local fund. According to the Westfield United Fund, over \$90,000 has been raised through donations and the matches from WUF and the Westfield Foundation, and the 65 applications for funding have been reviewed -- with the first checks going out on Monday to offer some initial relief! Thank you so much to all who have donated in support of our dedicated business owners and their employees, who are such an integral part of what makes our town so special.

New Jersey American Water issued a reminder today about items that should not be flushed down the toilet. Flushing wipes, paper towels, or other paper products not intended for use in wastewater systems can lead to sewer backups and in-home plumbing issues which may be expensive to repair. Even wipes labeled as "flushable" or "biodegradable" can cause backups for sewer utilities and headaches for homeowners. In addition, New Jersey American Water also warns against pouring grease, fat or oil down the drain. More information and tips can be found on the New Jersey American Water website.

I have a request of the community, following some feedback I have received from residents about the ongoing noise of landscapers and lawn equipment at this time of year. While we can't impose changes without an ordinance, I do appreciate the sentiment of folks working and schooling from home with open windows. Please make a collective effort to avoid using loud equipment between the hours between 9:00AM and 12:00PM as a courtesy to our neighbors and ask your landscapers to do the same. I cannot use the resources of our police to enforce this right now, but I am asking, as a first step, for us to come together and make an effort with this small accommodation.

Beginning next week, I expect to scale back my updates from nightly to two-three times each week, depending on the information at hand that needs to be distributed. Please be sure to follow me (@MayorBrindle) and the Town (@TownofWestfield) on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram for more frequent updates, as well as the Coronavirus Information Center on our website: www.westfieldnj.gov/corovanvirus.

In closing, I want to give a shout out to our WPD Community Resource Officers Tiffany Kenny, Kristopher Jackus, and Ricardo Johnson for responding swiftly to a request for seniors in need by delivering bags of groceries to their homes from the food pantry. Specials thanks to Police Chaplain Keith Gibbons for his assistance!

I'd also like to acknowledge GEP, a Clark company led by Westfield residents Roopa Makhija and JT Turimella, who immediately came through with a donated laptop for a child in need in a matter of hours.

These gestures are reflective of the generosity and compassion I continue to witness from our community. Please continue to check on your elderly or otherwise vulnerable neighbors (at an appropriate distance) and make sure they are okay. We are living in unprecedented times and we will all get through this together to what are certainly brighter days ahead. I'll leave you with this last photo from John Rzeznik's front porch.