



Mayor Brindle's COVID-19 Update March 12, 2021



COVID DATA FOR MARCH 5 - MARCH 11

The Department of Health reports 50 new cases of COVID-19 in Westfield from March 5-11. Of these cases:

- 13 were unable to be reached
- 9 are still under investigation
- 10 had no known exposure
- 10 had a positive household contact
- 5 had a known exposure
- 1 refused to be interviewed
- 1 was travel associated
- 1 was exposed at work

The ages of this week's cases ranged from under 1 to 79 years old, broken down as follows:

- Age 9 and under: 3 cases
- Age 10-19: 11 cases
- Age 20-29: 12 cases
- Age 30-39: 4 cases
- Age 40-49: 9 cases
- Age 50-59: 8 cases
- Age 60-69: 2 cases
- Age 70-79: 1 case
- Age 80-89: no cases
- Age 90 and above: no cases

Sadly, I must report two additional fatalities -- a 90 year-old female and a 78 year-old female, both of whom had been hospitalized -- bringing our total number of COVID deaths to 56.

Regional Health Officer Megan Avallone reports that this week, New Jersey has continued to show a plateau of high activity statewide and remains the highest in the nation in per capita confirmed COVID cases. Our region in the state (Central East region) also continues to show a high level of activity, although Westfield is currently in the moderate activity category. The most highly impacted age group was between 20 and 29 this week, representing 24% of the newly reported cases. In terms of vaccinations, New Jersey's vaccination rate is up 11% over last week's rate. More than 1.8 million New Jersey residents have been vaccinated with at least one dose (20.7% of the total population). In Union County, 97,705 (17.5%) of the population has received at least one dose of the vaccine and 47,689 (8.5%) have been fully vaccinated.

COVID-19: ONE YEAR LATER

On this day last year, I sent out my very first COVID update, communicating that there were 29 cases of COVID in New Jersey, including one death -- and one case in Union County. I wrote about our Regional Health Director Megan Avallone being in regular contact with Dr. Dolan to make determinations about potential school closures. Governor Murphy had declared a State of Emergency and had restricted outdoor gatherings to 250 people. I communicated that all Town-run programs and events were postponed until April 19, at which time we would reassess the public health situation. Two days later, on March 14, we had our first confirmed case in Westfield.

And now a full year has passed -- a year of the truly unimaginable. In this time, we have mourned the heartbreaking number of lives lost and our inability to console grieving family members at public memorials. We have felt for the many that have been impacted economically, and for businesses that may never recover.

Not to be minimized are the lost memories and countless personal milestones typically celebrated with friends and family that we can never reclaim. It is through these sacrifices, which have had a deep and ongoing impact on everyone, that we are reminded daily of our reality in this pandemic.

Amidst this pain and ongoing uncertainty, the community minded residents of Westfield proved to be at their best. From day one of this situation, I received numerous emails from residents asking how they could help to assist others, to organize, and to give.

And give, you all did. Neighborhoods cheered outside for heroic healthcare workers. The community threw their support behind our local businesses through supporting our Virtual Downtown and by raising over \$300,000 through the We Love Local fund. Rainbows of hope were hung in windows and chalked on sidewalks all over town. Our seniors were assisted by the Police Department's repurposed Community Resource Officers and checked on by the volunteers of Lifelong Westfield. Feed the Frontline, a grassroots fundraiser started by residents, raised over \$100,000 to feed healthcare workers with thousands of meals provided by our local restaurants. Volunteers sewed thousands of masks and over 100 medical gowns from donated fabric for a nearby senior facility. Painted wooden pallets, created to raise money, adorned lawns all over town. PPE donations overflowed our collection bins, and donated meals to our first responders were generously provided on a regular basis from local families. Residents lit candles in solidarity and contributed to Be the Light, raising over \$50,000 to help address the very real and mounting local hunger crisis exacerbated by the pandemic. And every day, parents juggled remote learning with remote work, and found endlessly creative ways to see their kids through these incredibly trying times.

It was also a year full of silver linings, and personally I am grateful for my own. The gift of time spent with my family, especially my college age kids, and getting to know them as adults (when did they become so funny and wise?). A new appreciation for the therapeutic benefits of my dogs, my health, and a walk outdoors. A renewed discovery of cooking, puzzles, and unplanned time. And intense gratitude for everything I have missed, especially my mom, and can't wait to discover again.

But the biggest silver lining is discovering that, despite the weight of an unprecedented crisis on everyone's plates, I continued to receive the messages simply asking, "What else can I do to help?"

That is the hallmark of the last year, and I know it's indicative of Westfield's future.

I want to thank all those who never hesitated to help in a time of great need. How lucky we are to live in a place with such generosity and kindness. I also want to give my heartfelt thanks to each of you for the important choices you made to contribute to public health. The sacrifice has been tremendous, and I'm sure at times felt like too much, but you will always have my gratitude for the part you played in protecting our community.

140 COVID updates later, I will continue to keep you apprised of significant developments on the vaccine and reopening fronts on a weekly basis, as well as share the local case information provided by the Regional Health Department as it's made available.

Even though we are not yet on the other side of this pandemic, we can begin to see glimpses of normalcy and embrace the hope provided by the vaccination rollout. Please get vaccinated when eligible, and continue to take all of the proper precautions, as we start to look ahead to a very bright post-COVID future for Westfield.

In a year like no other, thank you again for all you've done to make Westfield a community that cares so much about its people. Thank you for being the light.