

COVID-19 UPDATE

October: toughest month of the pandemic for Chautauqua County

MAYVILLE, N.Y.: - Chautauqua County has reported 124 new cases from October 24-30, bringing the total case numbers since the beginning of the pandemic over a milestone. With a total of 1,060 cases since March, 0.8% of the Chautauqua County population has tested positive for COVID-19.

With schools and colleges back in session, businesses reopening, and colder weather upon us, residents are spending more time indoors and more time with other people. Spending time indoors with non-household contacts and without masks are key elements to the spread of COVID-19.

“We’ve seen clusters related to a bridal dinner, a wedding, frequenting social clubs and bowling alleys. We’re seeing disease spread amongst households, group homes, health care facilities, co-workers and in places of business mainly because of activities that people partake in outside of work,” said Christine Schuyler, County Public Health Director. “COVID-19 is here and everyone needs to take personal responsibility for not spreading it. Wear a mask, keep your distance, wash your hands, and stay home if you’re not feeling well.”

Unannounced inspections of social clubs in the Dunkirk area occurred this week and such inspections of bars, restaurants, clubs, and other venues throughout Chautauqua County will continue. Owners, operators and patrons may be subject to fines up to \$15,000 for violating public health orders and regulations.

“Now is not the time to think you’re invincible or to ignore the rules,” said Schuyler. “We all want to get back to “normal” but that will not be possible until more measures are in place to control the spread of this virus.”

From October 1 to October 30, 389 cases were reported (37% of all cases to date).

- 121 (31%) were associated with the outbreak at Tanglewood Manor/Memory Garden with 24 employees, 7 community contacts, and 90 residents testing positive.
- 21 (5.3%) associated with a private event – a wedding - in the North County.
- 19 (4.8%) were students or employees at Fredonia State University.
- 17 (4.3%) are linked to social clubs in the Dunkirk area.
- 16 (4.1%) are linked to group homes.
- 7 (1.7%) linked to Jamestown Fire Department.

Free COVID-19 rapid testing clinics were held throughout the week in Jamestown and Dunkirk. From Monday to Thursday, 41 people tested positive for COVID-19 out of a total 908 tested (4.5% positivity). Results for Friday, October 30th will be reported next week.

Important to Note:

Eating and Drinking in Public

Restaurants, bars, and social clubs are open and it is no easy task to eat and drink while wearing a mask. While it is allowable to have your mask off at a table when you have food and drink in front of you, it is not advisable to stay in these venues, talking with others for extended periods of time, when social distancing is not being practiced. If you are not actively eating or drinking, you should wear your mask to protect yourself and others from COVID-19. Do not let your guard down at social clubs, bowling alleys, or public food and beverage establishments.

Events

Private gatherings are very tricky during COVID-19. These may be times for celebration or mourning, or highlighting milestones in our lives, however, keep in mind that bringing many people together during this pandemic is a dangerous activity - especially in enclosed spaces. It is a common trend to see guests at a wedding, party, or funeral wearing masks and socially distancing at the beginning of the event and then become more comfortable throughout the event - giving up on COVID-19 precautions. It is very important to follow the gathering limitations and to remain vigilant with COVID-19 precautions throughout the entire event. Locally and across the state and nation, these events have proven to be highly effective in spreading the virus.

Workplaces and Schools

Most workplaces and schools are doing exceptional work in preventing the spread of COVID-19 within their walls. Social distancing is being practiced, masks are being worn, and sanitization is occurring routinely. Students seem most likely to get COVID-19 from their household contacts, and as such, their risk for getting sick in school is very low. The same is true of workplaces; when we see several positive cases associated with a workplace, it is often due to an external event or social activity.

Positivity Rates

New York State reopening and travel guidelines frequently use positivity rates as benchmarks. Because these benchmarks are set and monitored by New York State, the figures posted by the state are used. You can monitor 7-and 14-day rolling averages on the County Dashboard: <https://forward.ny.gov/percentage-positive-results-county-dashboard>. Case totals reported by Chautauqua County are the most accurate for our county. Our staff monitors and cleans the data to ensure that cases are not reported more than once. Our totals also account for any transfers in and out of the care and monitoring of our public health nurses (because of transfer of care from one county or state to another).

Testing

Testing options for COVID-19 are constantly changing and improving. Through resources provided by New York State, Chautauqua County Health Department held free, public testing events throughout the month of October.

With the mass free testing clinics held in Jamestown and Dunkirk this week (10/26-10/30), testing supplies are nearly exhausted. There will be no free public testing events held by the Chautauqua County Health Department during the work week of November 2-6. Pending the delivery of additional supplies, free testing clinics will be scheduled during the weeks that follow. Clinics will be announced via press release and social media.

If you believe you need COVID-19 testing, consult with your health care provider. Testing options are also listed on the Chautauqua County webpage: <https://chqgov.com/public-health/covid-19-testing-sites>.

COVID-19 Statistics for October 30: 22 New Cases and 1 Death

- A gentleman in his 70s with multiple comorbid conditions succumbed to complications of COVID-19 at an out of state hospital. Our sincere condolences go to his loved ones.
- 142 active cases, continue to recover under orders of the Local Health Official per NYS Public Health Law including:
 - 22 new cases were reported October 30 including:
 - 3 cases in 14048 (Dunkirk)
 - 6 cases in 14701 (Jamestown)
 - 4 cases in 14063 (Fredonia)
 - 1 case in 14135 (Sheridan)
 - 3 cases in 14136 (Silver Creek)
 - 1 case in 14710 (Ashville)
 - 2 cases in 14728 (Dewittville)
 - 2 cases in 14782 (Sinclairville)

- Clusters:
 - Tanglewood Manor
 - Employees: 4 active cases; 20 recovered
 - Residents: 15 active cases; 75 recovered
 - Private event (wedding) in the North County: At least 21 linked cases; 9 cases active and 12 recovered.
 - Employees of the City of Jamestown Fire Department: 7 active cases.
 - Social clubs in the Dunkirk area: 17 cases linked; 6 active and 11 recovered.

- 22 people hospitalized* in Chautauqua County as of 10/28/2020 (most recent data available from NYS)
 - *number of persons in Chautauqua County hospitals diagnosed with COVID-19, regardless of residency

- To date:
 - 904 recovered cases;
 - 14 deaths; and
 - 1,060 total confirmed cases.

Stop the spread of COVID-19: Wear a mask; maintain a social distance of 6 feet; wash your hands often.

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