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COVID-19 Newsletter (vol. 53)

Center for Disaster Medicine, New York Medical College



NEW YORK MEDICAL COLLEGE

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Center for Disaster Medicine



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During this COVID-19 pandemic and other future events, the CDM has been and will continue to be a source of reliable information, education and models for mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery. We hope this informational document has helped provide you filtered and actionable information. As the pace of new information and changes occurs will evaluate the current once per week to determine if this information should be provided on a more frequent basis.

David Markenson, M.D., M.B.A.
Director
Center for Disaster Medicine

COVID-19 Statistics

	Total Cases	Total Deaths	Total Recovered	Total Tested

Worldwide	85,596,589	1,851,016	48,080,153	Not Available
United States	20,782,635	353,069	Not Available	252,978,384
New Jersey	493,102	19,225	56,873	7,801,895
New York	1,035,139	38,599	104,402	25,849,104
Connecticut	194,636	6,168	9,800	4,383,361

Information as of 1/4/21 at 2000 EST. Source: <https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/map.html>

United States COVID-19 Case Map / GIS



Center for Disaster Medicine Updates

- Coordinating volunteers to support local public health response to COVID-19.
- Conducting research and analysis of current events and COVID-19 response to identify strengths and areas for improvement in other regions.

- Updating and developing new programs to provide enhanced education on public health emergencies including pandemics.
- Redesigning summer fellowship in disaster and emergency medicine to better address preparedness skills, lessons learned and highlight the importance of high-fidelity simulation in medical education while finding new focus on pandemic-related research projects.
- Exploring course development opportunities in infection prevention and control for frontline responders in the hospital and in the field.
- Serving as a source of information for COVID-19 related concerns or questions regarding public health, emergency medical service (EMS), public safety and healthcare response.
- Local networking and pandemic response analysis for New York's tri-state area, using first-person experiences to highlight current trends.
- Coordinating and overseeing COVID-19 screenings at NYMC campus
- Offered Geriatric Emergency Medical Services and All Hazard Disaster Response courses to public safety provider
- Hosted The COVID-19 MCI: What Training Didn't Prepare Us For
- COVID-19 Vaccines: Virtual Q & A Session
- Offered Incident Response to Terrorist Bombing

Federal Updates

- The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced today that it has administered initial COVID-19 vaccine doses to more than 5,000 Veterans residing in its Community Living Centers and Spinal Cord Injury and Disorders Centers and more than 50,000 health care employees in its first two weeks (December 14 - 27) of providing COVID-19 vaccines. The 37 initial sites to first receive the vaccine were selected based on several factors, including having the capacity to store the vaccine at extremely cold temperatures and the ability to offer high-throughput vaccination. Last week, VA announced it began COVID-19 vaccinations at 128 additional sites using the Moderna and Pfizer COVID-19 vaccines. Both vaccines require two doses for maximum efficacy.
<https://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=5596>
- United Kingdom Prime Minister Boris Johnson announced on Monday a new national lockdown for England until at least mid-February to combat a fast-spreading new variant of the coronavirus, even as Britain ramped up its vaccination program by becoming the first nation to start using the shot developed by Oxford University and drugmaker AstraZeneca. Johnson said people must stay at home again, as they were ordered to do so in the first wave of the pandemic in March, this time because the new virus variant was spreading in a "frustrating and alarming" way. <https://apnews.com/article/uk-1st-oxford-astrazeneca-vaccine-virus-013f538e8ec3a153a4d2e39601961472>

The White House

President Trump has unveiled Guidelines for Opening Up America Again, a three-phased approach based on the advice of public health experts. To review the Guidelines and obtain additional information regarding Opening Up America Again.

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/openingamerica/>

President-Elect Biden Homepage

On December 29, 2020, President-elect Joe Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris announced additional members of the White House COVID-19 Response team. These diverse, accomplished, and crisis-tested individuals will work to quickly implement a comprehensive, whole-of-government COVID-19 response strategy to contain the pandemic, restore public trust, and protect all Americans.

<https://buildbackbetter.gov/press-releases/president-elect-biden-and-vice-president-elect-harris-announce-members-of-the-covid-19-response-team/>

President-Elect Biden and his team have established a website for his plans as he begins to transition for a transfer of power on January 20, 2021.

<https://buildbackbetter.gov/priorities/covid-19/>

Health and Human Services (HHS)

Vaccines will help prevent the spread of COVID-19 and bring this pandemic to an end. As Americans get vaccinated over the next few months, it is important to continue to follow public health safety measures. Watch this six minute video released by HHS which provides important information regarding vaccines.

<https://youtu.be/Z06JQhyZLUI>

For the latest COVID-19 information from HHS

<https://www.hhs.gov/about/news/coronavirus/index.html>

National Institutes of Health (NIH)

A peer-reviewed report on Moderna COVID-19 vaccine is published. The investigational vaccine known as mRNA-1273 was 94.1 percent efficacious in preventing symptomatic coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), according to preliminary results from a Phase 3 clinical trial reported in the New England Journal of Medicine. The vaccine also demonstrated efficacy in preventing severe COVID-19. Investigators identified no safety concerns and no evidence of vaccine-associated enhanced respiratory disease (VAERD).

<https://www.nih.gov/news-events/news-releases/peer-reviewed-report-moderna-covid-19-vaccine-publishes>

In an in-depth study of how COVID-19 affects a patient's brain, National Institutes of Health researchers consistently spotted hallmarks of damage caused by thinning and leaky brain blood vessels in tissue samples from patients who died shortly after contracting the disease. In

addition, they saw no signs of SARS-CoV-2 in the tissue samples, suggesting the damage was not caused by a direct viral attack on the brain. The results were published as a correspondence in the *New England Journal of Medicine*.

<https://www.nih.gov/news-events/news-releases/nih-study-uncovers-blood-vessel-damage-inflammation-covid-19-patients-brains-no-infection>

View the latest COVID-19 information from NIH

<https://www.nih.gov/coronavirus>

United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA)

As of December 28, 309 tests and sample collection devices are authorized by the FDA under emergency use authorizations (EUAs). These include 235 molecular tests and sample collection devices, 63 antibody tests, and 11 antigen tests. There are 32 molecular authorizations that can be used with home-collected samples. There is one molecular prescription at-home test, one antigen prescription at-home test, and one over-the-counter (OTC) at-home antigen test.

<https://www.fda.gov/news-events/press-announcements/coronavirus-covid-19-update-december-30-2020>

The FDA published a new toolkit to help stakeholders communicate in English and Spanish about hand sanitizer safety and use during the COVID-19 pandemic. New materials include social media messages and graphics, consumer information, and health professional messaging.

<https://www.fda.gov/emergency-preparedness-and-response/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19/hand-sanitizer-safety-and-use-communication-toolkit>

Two different mRNA vaccines have now shown remarkable effectiveness of about 95 percent in preventing COVID-19 infection in adults. As the first round of vaccine recipients become eligible to receive their second dose, FDA wants to remind the public about the

importance of receiving COVID-19 vaccines according to how they've been authorized by the FDA in order to safely receive the level of protection observed in the large randomized trials supporting their effectiveness.

<https://www.fda.gov/news-events/press-announcements/fda-statement-following-authorized-dosing-schedules-covid-19-vaccines>

For the latest overall FDA information about COVID-19

<https://www.fda.gov/emergency-preparedness-and-response/counterterrorism-and-emerging-threats/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

CDC Director Dr. Robert Redfield signed a declaration determining that the evictions of tenants could be detrimental to public health control measures to slow the spread of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/covid-eviction-declaration.html>

CDC is working to detect and characterize emerging viral variants. Furthermore, CDC has staff available to provide on-the-ground technical support to investigate the epidemiologic and clinical characteristics of SARS-CoV-2 variant infections. CDC will communicate new information as it becomes available.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/more/science-and-research/scientific-brief-emerging-variants.html>

CDC provides updated information regarding healthcare workers via this section entitled Clinical Questions about COVID-19: Questions and Answers.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/faq.html>

CDC has created this section regarding the Moderna vaccine to provide updated relevant information including side effects and safety data, clinical trials demographic statistics, and information on how the vaccine works.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/different-vaccines/Moderna.html>

CDC has created this section regarding the Pfizer BioNTech vaccine to provide updated relevant information including side effects and safety data, clinical trials demographic statistics, and information on how the vaccine works.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/different-vaccines/Pfizer-BioNTech.html>

The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices' Updated Interim Recommendation for Allocation of COVID-19 Vaccine. December 20, ACIP updated interim vaccine allocation recommendations. In Phase 1b, COVID-19 vaccine should be offered to persons aged ≥ 75 years and non-health care frontline essential workers, and in Phase 1c, to persons aged 65–74 years, persons aged 16–64 years with high-risk medical conditions, and essential workers not included in Phase 1b.

https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm695152e2.htm?s_cid=mm695152e2_x

On December 19, 2020, after a transparent, evidence-based review of available data, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) issued an interim recommendation for use of the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine in persons aged ≥ 18 years for the prevention of COVID-19.

https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm695152e1.htm?s_cid=mm695152e1_x

COVID-19 cases and deaths are rising across the United States. We all must remain vigilant. The changes we have had to make to routines and daily life are extremely hard, but these changes are even more important now and in the future. We must stop the spread of this new and dangerous virus. The more steps you and your family can take to prevent the spread of COVID-19, the safer you will be. The CDC provides this section to provide the updated information.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/need-to-know.html>

For daily updates of cases in United States

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/cases-updates/cases-in-us.html>

For the latest CDC information

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/cases-updates/index.html>

Clinical Trials

To view the latest information on clinical trials regarding COVID-19

<https://clinicaltrials.gov/ct2/results?cond=COVID-19>

Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS)

View the latest information from CMS

<https://www.cms.gov/About-CMS/Agency-Information/Emergency/EPRO/Current-Emergencies/Current-Emergencies-page>

American Red Cross

<https://www.redcrossblood.org/donate-blood/dlp/plasma-donations-from-recovered-covid-19-patients.html>

State Updates

New York

- Governor Andrew M. Cuomo signed the COVID-19 Emergency Eviction and Foreclosure Prevention Act of 2020. The Act (S.9114/A.11181) prevents residential evictions, foreclosure proceedings, credit discrimination and negative credit reporting related to the COVID-19 pandemic. It also extends the Senior Citizens' Homeowner Exemption and Disabled Homeowner Exemption from 2020 to 2021. The Act adds to New York State's efforts to protect tenants and homeowners from the economic hardship incurred as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. <https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-cuomo-signs-covid-19-emergency-eviction-and-foreclosure-prevention-act-2020>
- Governor Cuomo announced that unemployed New Yorkers will begin receiving extended and expanded federal unemployment benefits next week — the first week these benefits can be paid under federal law. New York is able to provide these benefits immediately due to proactive work by the State Department of Labor to prepare for the federal government finally enacting a bill to extend unemployment programs originally included in the CARES Act that were set to expire at the end of 2020. The programs extended include Pandemic Unemployment Assistance, which provides benefits for those not covered by traditional state unemployment insurance; Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation, which provides additional weeks of benefits after an individual exhausts the 26 weeks of state unemployment insurance; and Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation, which provides all New Yorkers receiving unemployment benefits an additional \$300 weekly payment. <https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-cuomo-announces-new-yorkers-begin-receiving-extended-federal-unemployment-benefits>
- Governor Cuomo announced he is signing an Executive Order to extend the requirement that death benefits be paid out to families of frontline government workers for an additional 30 days. The legislation providing these benefits, signed by the Governor in May (Chapter 89 of the Laws of 2020), would otherwise expire on December 31. The Governor also announced that more than 200,000 New Yorkers have now been vaccinated with the first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine and beginning next week, New York will open vaccination criteria to ambulatory care health workers and public-facing public health workers, including those administering COVID-19 tests. <https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-cuomo-announces-executive-order-requiring-death-benefits-families-frontline-government>
- Governor Cuomo announced that the first confirmed case of the UK strain of COVID-19 virus has been detected in Saratoga Springs. The new strain was detected by the Department of Health's Wadsworth laboratory as part of the state's UK strain testing program. <https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/audio-rush-transcript-governor-cuomo-announces-uk-strain-covid-19-has-been-detected-saratoga-0>

New York State Department of Health (DOH)

For the latest information about COVID-19 testing
<https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/covid-19-testing#overview>

For a list of positive cases by county in New York State
<https://covid19tracker.health.ny.gov/views/NYS-COVID19-Tracker/NYSDOHCOVID-19Tracker-Map?%3Aembed=yes&%3Atoolbar=no&%3Atabs=n>

Get the NYS DOH COVID-19 App to stay informed. Download the COVID-19 Alert NY app, New York State's official exposure notification app, to get private exposure alerts.

<https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/covid-alert-ny>

NYS DOH has created a dynamic COVID-19 Tracker which provides COVID-19 information regarding testing, cases, percentages, and fatalities across New York State. It also breaks down cases by county.

<https://covid19tracker.health.ny.gov/views/NYS-COVID19-Tracker/NYSDOHCOVID-19Tracker-Map?%3Aembed=yes&%3Atoolbar=no&%3Atabs=n>

NYS DOH provides updated information regarding reduction in quarantine period from fourteen to ten days post COVID-19 exposure.

<https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2020/12/covid19-health-advisory-updated-quarantine-guidance-12.26.20.pdf>

The Micro-Cluster Strategy identifies clusters and the areas around them and categorizes them into one or more color-coded zones with corresponding levels of restrictions based on severity: Red Zones, Orange Zones, and Yellow Zones. New rules and restrictions directly target areas with the highest transmission of COVID-19 cases & surrounding communities.

<https://forward.ny.gov/micro-cluster-strategy>

Two vaccines have been authorized by the FDA. The first, developed by Pfizer and BioNTech, was approved unanimously by New York State's independent COVID-19 Clinical Advisory Task Force on December 10 and formally authorized by the FDA on December 11, 2020. The second, developed by Moderna, was authorized by the FDA and approved unanimously by the Clinical Advisory Task Force on December 18, 2020.

<https://covid19vaccine.health.ny.gov/>

For the latest COVID-19 information from NYS DOH

<https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/home>

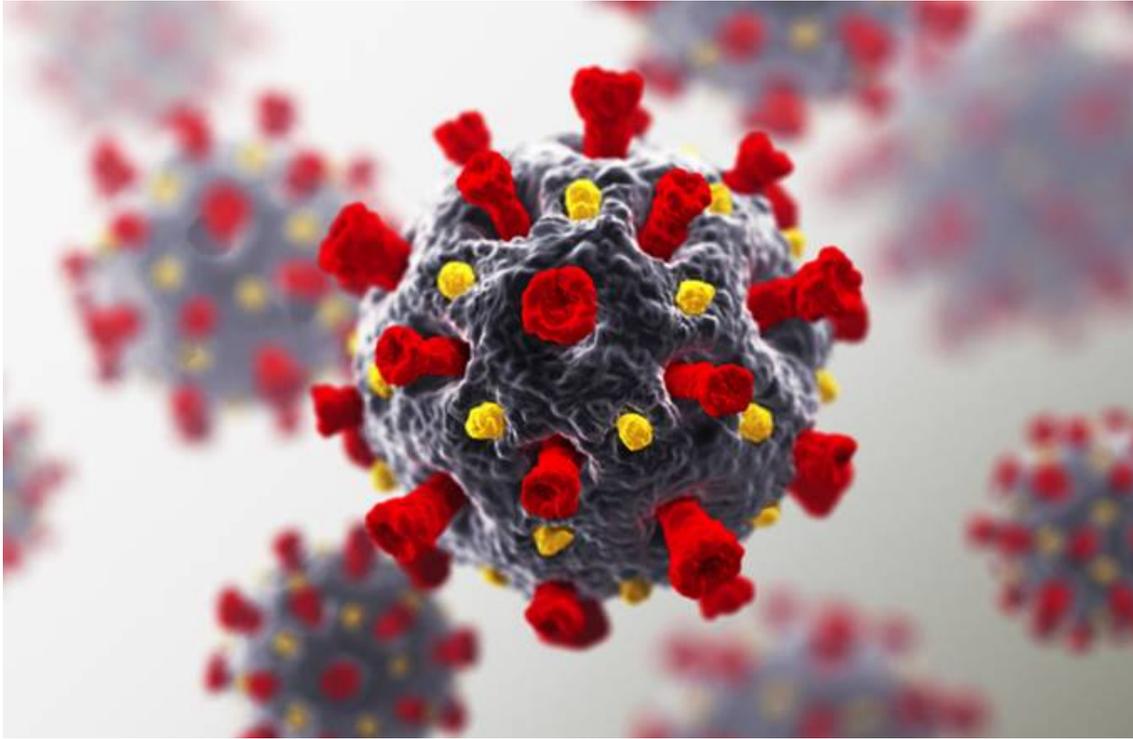
New Jersey

- Governor Phil Murphy and Interim Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Veterans Affairs (DMAVA) Col. Lisa Hou, D.O., announced that COVID-19 vaccinations are underway for residents and staff of the State's three veterans memorial homes. Residents and staff of the Paramus Veterans Memorial Home began receiving vaccinations yesterday and vaccinations are scheduled to begin over the course of the next week at the Menlo Park and Vineland Veterans Memorial Homes as part of the federal Pharmacy Partnership for Long-Term Care Program with CVS and Walgreens. <https://www.state.nj.us/governor/news/news/562020/approved/20201229a.shtml>
- Governor Murphy and Superintendent of the State Police Colonel Patrick Callahan announced Administrative Order 2020-25, which clarifies that indoor sports practices and competitions are subject to current indoor gathering limits, which was most recently set at 10 persons. However, a practice or competition can proceed with more than 10 persons if individuals who are not necessary for the activity, such as spectators, are not present. The total number of individuals still may not exceed 25 percent of the capacity

of the room in which the practice or competitions takes place, and such limit may not exceed 150 persons. The order further clarifies that the restrictions on interstate youth sports competitions in Executive Order No. 194 (2020) also apply to youth sports competitions conducted outdoors. The order will take effect on Saturday, January 2, 2021, when the prohibition on indoor sports practices and competitions in Executive Order No. 204 (2020) sunsets. <https://www.state.nj.us/governor/news/ao/docs/AO2020-25.pdf>

Connecticut

- Governor Ned Lamont announced that he is committing an additional \$31.2 million, as well as continued support for COVID-19 recovery and alternate COVID recovery facilities, to support Connecticut's nursing homes in their ongoing response to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. The announcement comes in addition to more than \$150 million the state previously spent on nursing homes for COVID response. The additional aid is being delivered through increased payments that are retroactive to November and prospective through February. <https://portal.ct.gov/Office-of-the-Governor/News/Press-Releases/2020/12-2020/Governor-Lamont-Commits-an-Additional-31-Million-To-Support-Nursing-Homes>
- Governor Lamont and Connecticut Department of Labor Commissioner Kurt Westby today provided an update on the Emergency Coronavirus Recovery Act of 2020, known as the CARES Act extension. The law protects Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) and Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC) programs; allocates an additional \$300 per week benefit for all claimants for up to 11 weeks; extends the interest waiver for Trust Fund borrowing; and continues 100 percent federal funding for the Shared Work program. <https://portal.ct.gov/Office-of-the-Governor/News/Press-Releases/2020/12-2020/Governor-Lamont-CARES-Act-II-Will-Provide-Relief-for-Unemployed>



Local Updates

New York Blood Center (NYBC)

NYC Mayor's Office Video Highlights Urgent Need for Blood

Donations are down significantly since the pandemic began, as blood drives at businesses, schools, churches, and other sites have stopped due to the COVID-19 stay-at-home measures. Check out the video below from the Office of New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio, highlighting the urgent need for blood during the coronavirus pandemic and encouraging New Yorkers to visit [nybc.org](https://www.nybc.org) to schedule an appointment.

<https://www.nybc.org/news/articles/nyc-mayors-office-video-highlights-urgent-need-blood/>

For the latest updated NYBC information about COVID-19:

<https://nybc.org/covid-19/>

New York City (NYC) Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH)

For NYC DOHMH's COVID-19 information for providers

<https://www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/covid/covid-19-providers.page>

For NYC DOHMH updated COVID-19 data page
<https://www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/covid/covid-19-data.page>

For NYC DOHMH updated guidance regarding COVID-19 vaccine
<https://www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/covid/covid-19-vaccines.page>

NYC DOHMH provides updated COVID-19 information regarding prevention and groups at higher risk and reminds people to do their part to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 in NYC by taking a few steps every day.
<https://www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/covid/covid-19-prevention-and-care.page>

NYC DOHMH provides an update on vaccination distribution which is subject to change.
<https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/doh/downloads/pdf/covid/planned-covid-19-vaccine-distribution-nyc>

For the latest COVID-19 information from NYC DOHMH
<https://www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/covid/covid-19-main.page>

Westchester County Department of Health

Watch video with Dr. Sherlita Amler, Westchester County Health Commissioner, and Peter DeLucia, Assistant Health Commissioner, who discuss COVID-19 safety and protocols.
<https://youtu.be/c3IOF4LvIE>

If you need to know whether you should quarantine or self-isolate, use our Quarantine or Self-Isolate tool. This tool will ask a series of questions to help determine whether you are subject to an Order of Isolation, an Order of Quarantine, or if it is recommended that you Self-Quarantine. Guidance will be given based on your answers.
<https://covideterminationtree.westchestergov.com/covidDeterminationTree/>

For the latest COVID-19 information in Westchester including how to avoid the latest vaccine scams offering earlier access to vaccines.
<https://health.westchestergov.com/2019-novel-coronavirus>

Putnam County Department of Health

Some private healthcare providers in Putnam County are able to provide testing. A healthcare provider will be able to assess and if indicated, test for flu or other viruses. If you have had direct contact with someone known to have tested positive with COVID-19 or have recently returned from an area with a high incidence of COVID-19, please inform your healthcare provider before you go to your appointment. Some healthcare providers are offering telemedicine visits, a virtual visit through your computer or phone. Refer to this website to see updated information.
<https://www.putnamcountyny.com/health/coronavirus/#toggle-id-3>

Breakdown of positive cases by towns in Putnam County as of January 4, 2021-
<https://www.putnamcountyny.com/breakdown-of-positive-cases-by-towns-in-putnam-county-1-4-2021/>

For the latest COVID-19 information
<https://www.putnamcountyny.com/health/coronavirus/>

Dutchess County Department of Health

For the latest COVID-19 information:

<https://www.dutchessny.gov/Departments/DBCH/2019-Novel-Coronavirus.htm>

Orange County Department of Health

For the latest COVID-19 information

<https://www.orangecountygov.com/1906/2019-Novel-Coronavirus-Information>

Updated COVID-19 dashboard for Orange County, NY

<https://ocnygis.maps.arcgis.com/apps/opsdashboard/index.html#/21de1fb5ce0c480f95dc0cf2b8b83b71>

Rockland County Department of Health

Review Rockland County's dashboard with the latest COVID-19 information regarding cases, hospitalizations and deaths

<https://rockland-covid-19-portal-rockland.hub.arcgis.com/>

County's COVID-19 Call Center 845-238-1956 is available Monday-Friday from 8:00 am-5:00 pm or email COVIDCallCenter@co.rockland.ny.us

For the latest COVID-19 information

<https://rocklandgov.com/departments/health/coronavirus-covid-19/>

Healthcare

GNHYHA provides the latest vaccination guidance updates as the rollout continues throughout New York City area. Please refer to this website to get the latest information.

<https://www.gnyha.org/tool/public-health-agency-vaccination-guidance/>

For the latest COVID-19 information for healthcare facilities from the Greater New York Hospital Association that covers hospitals in the tri-state area

<https://www.gnyha.org/>



Center for Disaster Medicine Media

Faculty News:

New coronavirus variant case reported in Florida

CBS News

1/1/2021

<https://www.cbsnews.com/video/case-of-new-coronavirus-variant-reported-in-florida/>

Robert G. Lahita, M.D., Ph.D., professor of medicine

Vaccinating Black Americans Is Essential

News Need News

1/1/2021

<https://newsneednews.com/celebrities/vaccinating-black-americans-is-essential/>

Mark J. Kittleson, Ph.D., professor and chair of Department of Public Health

What's the Deal with the New Strain of COVID-19 In the UK?

Shape

12/22/2020

<https://www.shape.com/lifestyle/mind-and-body/new-covid-strain-uk>

Robert W. Amler, M.D., M.B.A., dean of the School of Health Sciences and Practice and vice president for government affairs

New York City Covid-19 Contact Tracers Brace for Long Winter

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/new-york-city-covid-19-contact-tracers-brace-for-long-winter-11609120004>

The Wall Street Journal (PDF attached)

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Faculty News:

Hospitals fear post-holiday COVID-19 surge, as new travel restrictions imposed

CBS News

<https://www.cbsnews.com/video/coronavirus-surge-holiday-uk-travel-restrictions/#x>
12/25/2020

Robert G. Lahita, M.D., Ph.D., professor of medicine

How Black Doctors Are Addressing COVID-19 Vaccine Worries

Health Central

12/29/2020

<https://www.healthcentral.com/article/historical-racism-covid-19-vaccine>

Dial Hewlett, M.D., adjunct associate professor of microbiology and immunology

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