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COVID-19 Newsletter (vol. 65)

Center for Disaster Medicine, New York Medical College



NEW YORK MEDICAL COLLEGE

A MEMBER OF THE Touro College and University System

Center for Disaster Medicine



Tuesday, March 30, 2021

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 occur, we will evaluate the current once per week to determine if this information should be provided on a more frequent basis.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Markenson".

David Markenson, M.D., M.B.A.

Director

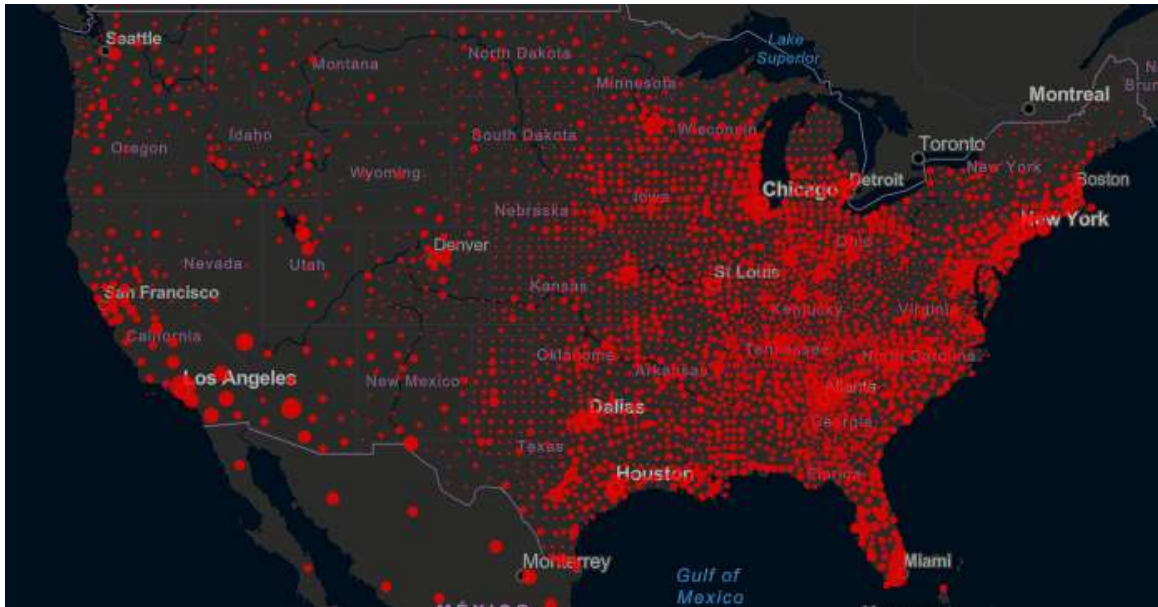
Center for Disaster Medicine

COVID-19 Statistics

	Total Cases	Total Deaths	Total Recovered	Total Tested
Worldwide	123,627,191	2,722,203	70,092,839	Not Available
United States	29,867,412	542,888	Not Available	382,222,468
New Jersey	869,037	24,181	Not Available	11,645,357
New York	1,785,565	49,444	Not Available	42,798,540
Connecticut	299,667	7,841	Not Available	6,877,464

Information as of 3/23/21 at 0000 EDT. Source: <https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/map.html>

United States COVID-19 Case Map / GIS



Center for Disaster Medicine Updates

- Delivered Geriatric Emergency Medical Services (GEMS) course to members of different public safety agencies from New York.
- Presented invited lecture regarding COVID-19 response and best practices to graduate students enrolled in Master in Homeland Security degree in Guatemala.
- Coordinating and overseeing COVID-19 screenings at NYMC campus
- Continue to partner with local organizations such as Westchester Department of Emergency Services and Westchester Medical Center to ensure ongoing collaboration with all public safety agencies.
- 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.
- 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.

To view the Center for Disaster Medicine's newest webinar, please click here - [The COVID-19 Vaccine: What to Tell Your Patients](#)

Federal

- The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced it will make grants totaling \$1 billion to State Veterans Homes operated across the country to ensure residents continue to receive high quality care, live in modern, safe facilities and are protected from the COVID-19 pandemic. <https://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=5648>
- President Joe Biden signed the SAVE LIVES Act into law today, expanding VA's legal authority to provide COVID-19 vaccines to all Veterans, regardless of their VA health care enrollment status, as well as Veteran spouses, caregivers and some beneficiaries. The SAVE LIVES Act removed some of the legal limits on the medical care VA can provide to Veterans, based on health care eligibility and priority groups. The expanded authority depends on readily available COVID-19 vaccine supply and requires VA to continue to prioritize vaccinations and healthcare delivery for our nation's Veterans enrolled in VA care. <https://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=5649>

The White House

The official website of the White House delivers bold action and immediate relief for American families as the country grapples with converging crises. This includes actions to control the COVID-19 pandemic, provide economic relief, tackle climate change, and advance racial equity and civil rights, as well as immediate actions to reform our immigration system and restore America's standing in the world.

<https://www.whitehouse.gov>

Health and Human Services (HHS)

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), through a partnership between the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Administration for Community Living (ACL), will provide nearly \$100 million to help increase vaccinations among older adults and people with disabilities. This effort will help advance the key goals of protecting those most vulnerable and advancing equity within President Biden's National Strategy for the COVID-19 Response and Pandemic Preparedness.

<https://www.hhs.gov/about/news/2021/03/29/hhs-to-expand-access-to-covid-19-vaccines-for-older-adults-and-people-with-disabilities.html>

For the latest COVID-19 information from HHS

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

National Institutes of Health (NIH)

An international team of scientists has found evidence that SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, infects cells in the mouth. While it's well known that the upper airways and lungs are primary sites of SARS-CoV-2 infection, there are clues the virus can infect cells in other parts of the body, such as the digestive system, blood vessels, kidneys and, as this new study shows, the mouth.

<https://www.nih.gov/news-events/news-releases/scientists-find-evidence-novel-coronavirus-infects-mouths-cells>

The Data and Safety Monitoring Board (DSMB) notified NIAID, BARDA, and AstraZeneca that it was concerned by information released by AstraZeneca on initial data from its COVID-19 vaccine clinical trial. The DSMB expressed concern that AstraZeneca may have included outdated information from that trial, which may have provided an incomplete view of the efficacy data. We urge the company to work with the DSMB to review the efficacy data and ensure the most accurate, up-to-date efficacy data be made public as quickly as possible.

<https://www.nih.gov/news-events/news-releases/niaid-statement-astrazeneca-vaccine>

View the latest COVID-19 information from NIH

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

United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA)

As of March 26, 2021, 348 tests and sample collection devices are authorized by the FDA under emergency use authorizations (EUAs). These include 258 molecular tests and sample collection devices, 74 antibody and other immune response tests, and 16 antigen tests. There are 42 molecular authorizations that can be used with home-collected samples. There is one molecular prescription at-home test, two antigen prescription at-home tests, one over-the-counter (OTC) at-home antigen test, and one OTC molecular test.

<https://www.fda.gov/news-events/press-announcements/coronavirus-covid-19-update-march-26-2021>

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)

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) plans to provide \$300 million to jurisdictions for community health worker (CHW) services to support Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) prevention and control, and an additional \$32 million for training, technical assistance, and evaluation. CHWs are frontline public health workers who have a trusted relationship with the community and are able to facilitate access to a variety of services and resources for community members.

<https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2021/p0325-community-healthworkers-support.html>

The emerging variants CDC is closely monitoring have mutations in the virus genome that alter the characteristics and cause the virus to act differently in ways that are significant to public health (e.g., causes more severe disease, spreads more easily between humans, requires different treatments, changes the effectiveness of current vaccines). It's important to understand that genetic mutations are expected, and some variants can spread and become predominant while others subside.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/transmission/variant-cases.html>

CDC provides daily data tracker which has maps and charts tracking cases, deaths, and trends of COVID-19 in the United States- updated daily by 8 p.m. ET.

<https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#datatracker-home>

For the latest CDC information

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

Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS)

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) released an updated data snapshot detailing the impact of COVID-19 on Medicare beneficiaries, particularly among underserved beneficiaries including racial and ethnic minorities, adults 85 years old and older, and people with certain pre-existing conditions.

<https://www.cms.gov/newsroom/press-releases/cms-updates-medicare-covid-19-data-snapshot>

View the latest information from CMS

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

Vaccines

In this section, vaccine-related information from various sources will be collected, reviewed, and tabulated here. As of March 30, 2021, the FDA has granted Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) to Pfizer BioNTech, Moderna and Janssen/Johnson & Johnson. Now with three vaccines with EUA, the goal is to vaccinate a larger number of persons in the coming months throughout the United States. As additional vaccines are granted EUA, information for those vaccines will also be included.

A new CDC study provides strong evidence that mRNA COVID-19 vaccines are highly effective in preventing SARS-CoV-2 infections in real-world conditions among health care personnel, first responders, and other essential workers. These groups are more likely than the general population to be exposed to the virus because of their occupations.

<https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2021/p0329-COVID-19-Vaccines.html>

CDC provides update on “How to talk about COVID-19 vaccines with friends and family.” COVID-19 vaccines are new, and it’s normal to for people to have questions about them. The sheer amount of information—and misinformation—about COVID-19 vaccines can be overwhelming to anyone.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/talk-about-vaccines.html>

CDC provides overall U.S. COVID-19 Vaccine, deliveries and administration, maps, charts, and data updated daily by 8 p.m. This section represents all vaccine partners including jurisdictional partner clinics, retail pharmacies, long-term care facilities, Federal Emergency Management Agency and Health Resources and Services Administration partner sites, and federal entity facilities.

<https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#vaccinations>

CDC created this section regarding the Johnson & Johnson’s Janssen 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/janssen.html>

CDC 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 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>

HHS created this section to provide the latest information about COVID-19 vaccines.

<https://www.hhs.gov/coronavirus/covid-19-vaccines/index.html>

On March 29, 2021, New York Governor Andrew M. Cuomo today announced a new expansion of COVID-19 vaccine eligibility in New York. Beginning Tuesday, March 30 at 8 a.m., all New Yorkers 30 years of age and older will be eligible to receive the vaccine. Beginning April 6, universal eligibility goes into effect and all New Yorkers 16 years of age and older will be eligible to receive the vaccine.

<https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-cuomo-announces-new-yorkers-30-years-age-and-older-will-be-eligible-receive-covid-19>

On March 26, 2021, Governor Cuomo announced a partnership with SOMOS Community Care to provide COVID-19 vaccines directly to accredited primary care physicians in SOMOS' health network who will vaccinate underserved New Yorkers. The program will initially cover 75 practices in the Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan and Queens, and will scale up to 100 practices as supply allows. The program will launch in the coming weeks and New Yorkers will be able to make appointments directly through SOMOS.

<https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/video-audio-photos-rush-transcript-governor-cuomo-announces-partnership-somos-community-care>

The NYS DOH COVID-19 Vaccine Tracker Dashboard will update New Yorkers on the distribution of the vaccine including the number of doses received by the state, a breakdown of first or second doses, and the number of persons vaccinated with the first and second doses in each region.

<https://covid19vaccine.health.ny.gov/covid-19-vaccine-tracker>

NYS DOH releases instructions for New York State-operated vaccination sites

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

For NYC DOHMH updated guidance regarding COVID-19 vaccine

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

The Vaccine Finder is a one-stop site for New Yorkers to find their nearest COVID-19 vaccination location. The Vaccine Finder can also provide New Yorkers with information to schedule vaccination appointments.

<https://vaccinefinder.nyc.gov/>

Educational Institution Information

- Higher Education
 - For high school students, this year has been anything but normal. Many have taken their classes remotely or in hybrid configurations -- modalities that are new to many in K-12 education. Potential learning loss from this past year has been at the center of debates around school reopening across the country. But for higher education, the question is more narrow: Will students enter college less academically prepared than previous semesters? And if so, what can institutions do to help? Learning loss is usually studied mostly at the K-8 grade level and measured with annual standardized tests. Before the pandemic, researchers mostly focused on

learning loss over summer vacations. When young students would return in the fall, some wouldn't be able to demonstrate skills they had mastered in the spring. With the pandemic, some in education have taken a more expansive view of the phenomenon, choosing to look at missed opportunities, rather than only "lost knowledge."

<https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2021/03/25/should-colleges-be-thinking-about-high-school-learning-loss>

- Rutgers University announced that it would require students to be vaccinated against COVID-19 before coming to campus next fall. The public institution in New Jersey may be the first or at least among the first universities to take the step of mandating students receive a COVID-19 vaccine. Three different vaccines are currently authorized for emergency use, but not yet fully approved, by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. In making the decision on whether to require vaccines approved through the emergency use authorization (EUA) process, colleges are treading untested legal ground.

<https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2021/03/26/rutgers-will-require-covid-vaccine-students-fall>

- K-12

- Although the latest sample accounts for only a sliver of high schools nationwide, the trend of bigger losses in students from low-income and high-minority high schools noted in earlier data persists. And a 6.8 percent decline would still be "unprecedented" for a single year, according to the Clearinghouse. Year-over-year changes in enrollment didn't vary much by schools based on income and racial and ethnic demographics prior to the pandemic, according to the Clearinghouse. This year, however, large disparities appear in the data. <https://www.k12dive.com/news/college-enrollment-declines-for-2020-high-school-grads-may-not-be-as-big-as/597328/>
- Pandemic-related challenges are taking a toll on the nation's collective mental health, whether through the loss of income, loss of loved ones or loss of community. While no age group is spared, we must pay extra attention to our nation's teens and young adults, whose mental health needs are the greatest in modern times. Over the past year, issues of mental health have often fallen by the wayside. Typically when students are physically in schools, teachers can spot signs of self-harm or notice changes in behavior. However, in remote learning, this is often more difficult as students may not be logging online each day, have their cameras off, or not have an opportunity to speak one-on-one with their teacher. Sadly, we've seen examples of teen suicide rates increasing since the pandemic, and I fear we may see similar instances in the months and years to come without intervention.

<https://www.k12dive.com/news/as-schools-reopen-prioritizing-student-mental-health-can-prevent-twin-dem/597332/>

Clinical Trials

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

<https://www.clinicaltrials.gov/ct2/results?recrs=&cond=Covid19&term=&cntry=&state=&city=&dist=>

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 and New York State Health Commissioner Howard Zucker, M.D., J.D., announced the release of revised nursing home visitation guidance to align with guidelines recently released by the U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. The guidance, which takes effect immediately, permits visitation at all times and for all residents with limited exceptions for unvaccinated residents in areas of high community spread and lower resident vaccination rates, residents with confirmed COVID-19 infection or those in isolation or quarantine. Facilities must still continue to adhere to strong infection control practices. <https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-cuomo-state-health-commissioner-dr-zucker-announce-revised-nursing-home-visitation>
- Governor Cuomo announced a partnership with SOMOS Community Care to provide COVID-19 vaccines directly to accredited primary care physicians in SOMOS' health network who will vaccinate underserved New Yorkers. The program will initially cover 75 practices in the Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan and Queens, and will scale up to 100 practices as supply allows. The program will launch in the coming weeks and New Yorkers will be able to make appointments directly through SOMOS. The Governor also announced that the state and SOMOS will sponsor a pop-up vaccination site at the New Settlement Community Center in the Bronx, which hosted today's announcement. That site will operate this upcoming weekend to vaccinate New Yorkers in the surrounding community. <https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-cuomo-announces-partnership-somos-community-care-vaccinate-underserved-new-yorkers>
- Governor Cuomo announced that New York State will establish an additional state-run mass vaccination site in Rockland County at Rockland Community College's Eugene Levy Fieldhouse to further grow New York's vast distribution network. The site is in development and is expected to open Thursday, April 1 with appointments opening at 8 a.m. Tuesday, March 30. Hours of operation for the Rockland Community College site are 8 a.m. to 7 p.m., seven days a week. <https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-cuomo-announces-state-run-mass-vaccination-site-open>

New York State Department of Health (DOH)

Governor Cuomo announced that domestic travelers will no longer be required to quarantine after entering New York from another U.S. State or U.S. Territory starting April 1. While no longer required, the NYS Department of Health still recommends quarantine after domestic travel as an added precaution. Mandatory quarantine remains in effect for international travelers. All travelers must continue to fill out the Traveler Health Form. Individuals should continue strict

adherence to all safety guidelines to stop the spread - wearing masks, socially distancing and avoiding gatherings.

<https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-cuomo-announces-quarantine-domestic-travel-will-no-longer-be-required-starting-april>

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>

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>

For the latest COVID-19 information from NYS DOH

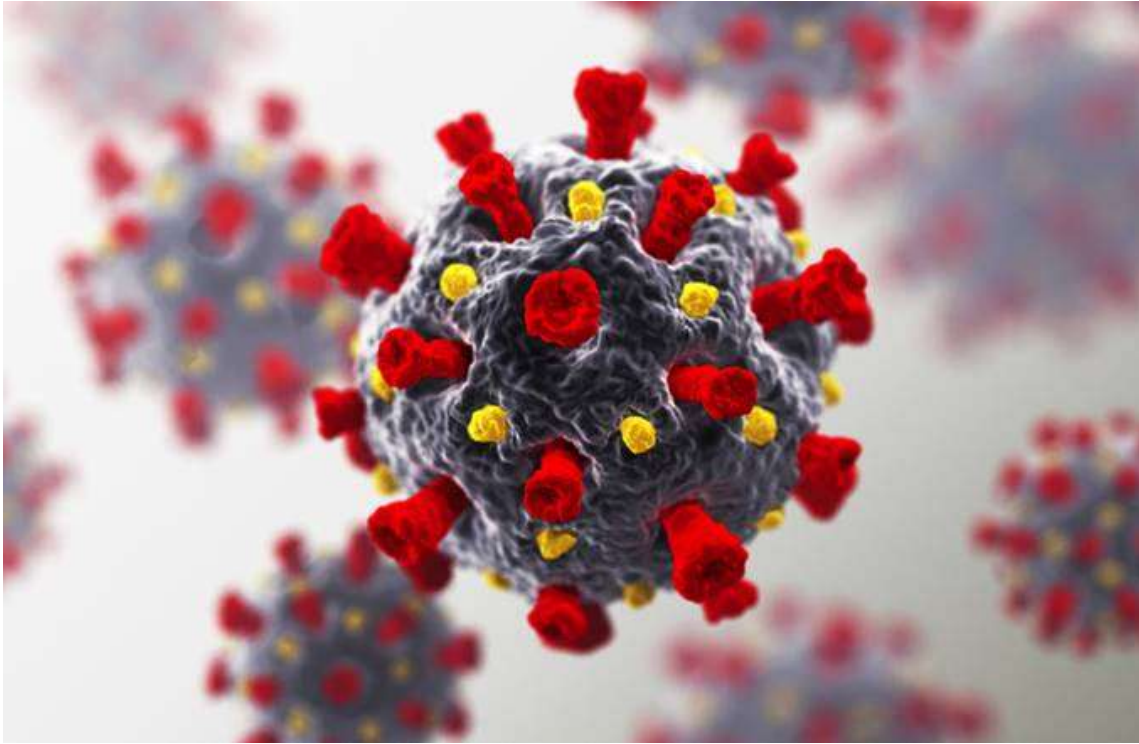
<https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/home>

New Jersey

- In partnership with the Biden Administration, Governor Phil Murphy announced the planned opening of a pilot Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Community Vaccination Center located at the Naimoli Family Athletic and Recreational Facility at the New Jersey Institute of Technology in Newark. As part of the shared goal of the Murphy Administration and Biden Administration to efficiently and equitably administer COVID-19 vaccinations, the Community Vaccination Center will have the capacity to vaccinate 6,000 individuals per day, seven days per week. Vaccines will be provided directly from the federal government, above and beyond the state's regular allocations. Supported by the federal government in partnership with the New Jersey Office of Emergency Management, the New Jersey Department of Health, Essex County, and City of Newark, the Community Vaccination Center will target vulnerable communities based on the Centers for Disease Control's Social Vulnerability Index. <https://www.nj.gov/governor/news/news/562021/approved/20210326a.shtml>
- Governor Phil Murphy announced the expansion of eligibility for more frontline essential workers and high-risk groups in New Jersey's COVID-19 vaccination program. Eligible groups include individuals ages 55-64, individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, higher education educators and staff, and communications and utility infrastructure workers among others. <https://www.nj.gov/governor/news/news/562021/approved/20210326b.shtml>
- Governor Murphy signed Executive Order No. 234, which will increase outdoor gathering limits and increase capacity for seated events at large venues. The Order also clarifies indoor capacity limits for banquet halls and similar venues. <https://nj.gov/infobank/eo/056murphy/pdf/EO-234.pdf>

Connecticut

- Governor Ned Lamont announced that his administration plans to make a historic investment in early childhood programs across Connecticut to assist in their ongoing response to the COVID-19 pandemic and its resulting economic impact, including through the release of \$210 million from the federal funding the state has received to date to support pandemic recovery efforts. The governor announced the plan during a visit this afternoon from Vice President Kamala Harris at the Boys and Girls Club of New Haven. Connecticut's Congressional delegation helped champion passage of the funding under the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSAA) that was adopted in late 2020, and through the American Rescue Plan (ARP) that was approved several weeks ago. The Lamont administration will work collaboratively with the Connecticut General Assembly to finalize the plan so the state can continue supporting children, families, and child care providers through this difficult time. <https://portal.ct.gov/Office-of-the-Governor/News/Press-Releases/2021/03-2021/Governor-Lamont-Announces-Historic-Investments-in-Child-Care-Programs>
- Governor Lamont is applauding the Connecticut House of Representatives for unanimously voting to approve legislation that codifies into state statutes the executive orders he issued during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic that relax restrictions on outdoor dining at restaurants and enabling these businesses to provide expanded service to their customers outside. The legislation permits restaurants to operate under these relaxed rules through March 31, 2022, and allows municipalities to expedite permanent changes to their zoning rules if they wish to expand the availability of outdoor dining and retail activity. Governor Lamont said that not only is it a good idea for these relaxed rules to continue for another year, but he thinks the legislature may also want to revisit this concept again in the near future to enable restaurants to continue offering expanded outdoor dining on a permanent basis. <https://portal.ct.gov/Office-of-the-Governor/News/Press-Releases/2021/03-2021/Governor-Lamont-Applauds-House-Passage-of-Legislation-Relaxing-State-Laws-on-Outdoor-Dining>



Local Updates

New York Blood Center (NYBC)

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 updated COVID-19 data page

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

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

For the latest breakdown of positive cases in Westchester County as of March 28, 2021

<https://wcgis.maps.arcgis.com/apps/opsdashboard/index.html#/280339d96db14efd9cc304dba0f3a71d>

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

Breakdown of positive cases by towns in Putnam County as of March 22, 2021-

<https://www.putnamcountyny.com/breakdown-of-positive-cases-by-towns-in-putnam-county-3-22-2021/>

For the latest COVID-19 information

<https://www.putnamcountyny.com/health/coronavirus/>

Dutchess County Department of Health

Breakdown of positive cases in Dutchess County as of March 29, 2021

<https://www.dutchessny.gov/Departments/DBCH/covid-19-dashboard.htm>

For the latest COVID-19 information:

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

Orange County Department of Health

Updated COVID-19 dashboard for Orange County, NY as of March 29, 2021

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

For the latest COVID-19 information

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

Rockland County Department of Health

Review Rockland County's dashboard with the latest COVID-19 information regarding cases as of March 29, 2021

<https://www.arcgis.com/apps/opsdashboard/index.html#/d074e0336e81449393a76d1768ceb096>

For the latest COVID-19 information

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

Healthcare

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:

Can B12 vitamin help COVID long-haulers?

KNC1070

3/19/2021

<https://www.radio.com/knx1070/news/can-b12-vitamin-help-covid-long-haulers>

Gary Rogg, M.D., assistant professor of medicine

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