



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



CONFIRMED CASES

- Today, there are 111,188 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in New Jersey, with another 818 still under investigation. Currently, the County reports 12,011 cases, with Westfield reporting 214 to date. Unfortunately, I am reporting 12 additional fatalities -- seven females (ages 94, 82, 81, 79, 78, 67, and 65) and five males (ages 98, 94, 89, 64, and 60) -- bringing the total number of documented deaths to 31. Of these 12 newly reported fatalities, six were associated with a long-term care facility.
- When we see these numbers, let us not lose sight of the lives lost -- as every one of these 31 fatalities to date was a member of our community who is mourned by all those they've left behind. Last week we lost 64 year old Nick Gismondi, a champion of Westfield baseball, avid supporter of Westfield athletics and member of the Westfield Boosters Hall of Fame. He was instrumental in bringing the Gumbert Park field house to fruition, and his legacy lives on in every Westfield kid that picks up a ball and bat. We also lost Candy Jacovino, Secretary to American Legion Post 3 Women's Auxiliary and long time and well known dispatcher for the Westfield Rescue Squad. We mourn with the Rescue Squad and all of the first responders on their loss, and remain grateful for Candy's service to our community.
- For a more detailed breakdown of statewide numbers, visit the NJ Department of Health COVID-19 Dashboard.

FEDERAL, STATE, AND COUNTY UPDATES

- The US Small Business Administration today resumed accepting Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) applications from participating lenders. For additional information about the program and how to apply, visit www.sba.gov/funding-programs/loans/coronavirus-relief-options/paycheck-protection-program
- Today, Governor Murphy outlined The Road Back – which he described as a roadmap to restore the health, strength, and well-being of New Jersey for the long-term that will be guided by the overarching principle that public health creates economic health. Governor Murphy's stay-at-home Executive Order, which has been in effect since March 21st, will remain in effect in its entirety until further notice. The following six principles and key metrics will guide the process for lifting restrictions and restoring New Jersey's economic health through public health. For additional details on each, please visit covid19.nj.gov:
 - Demonstrate Sustained Reductions in New COVID-19 Cases and Hospitalizations
 - Expand Testing Capacity
 - Implement Robust Contact Tracing
 - Secure Safe Places and Resources for Isolation and Quarantine
 - Execute a Responsible Economic Restart
 - Ensure New Jersey's Resiliency
- Beginning today, the Union County coronavirus drive-thru testing center at Kean University is operating under new hours: 9:00AM - 4:00PM, Monday through Friday, and 9:00AM - 2:00PM on Saturday. Testing is free. The Union County testing center is available to Union County residents who are experiencing coronavirus symptoms. Union County residents with symptoms who wish to be tested should call 908-214-7107. First responders and front-line health workers who are experiencing symptoms can also contact the center, regardless of where they live. First responders and front-line health workers can call 908-373-5105.

LOCAL UPDATES

- I have great news to share from The Greater Westfield Area Chamber of Commerce -- the Westfield Farmers Market has gone virtual! In an effort to provide residents with ongoing access to local produce and other offerings while practicing social distancing, the Virtual Farmers Market will arrive this Saturday, May 2, a full month ahead of the usual start date. All purchases must be made online and picked up by car in the North Avenue train station parking lot between 10:00AM and noon. Because the market is starting a month early, it will take time before the farmers have all of their usual seasonal products available. The initial launch includes a few vendors, with more to be added in the coming weeks. To place an order and obtain all details about pick up procedures, please visit mycommunitymarketplace.com/westfield-farmers-market. Thank you to the GWACC and to the organizers of the market, Chris and Lisa Devine, for their ongoing commitment to providing locally sourced products to the community -- especially at a time when additional options for produce and food products are even more beneficial.
- Donations to We Love Local have now topped \$225,000, with funding going to 155 local businesses to date! The application deadline for business funding is April 30. In addition, Westfield residents Audrey and Joe Mindak are continuing their painted pallets fundraising effort to benefit We Love Local, with more information here: <https://bit.ly/2yRnqTy>

- Let's keep the momentum going on the Census! Westfield's completion rate now stands at 70%, which is among the top five in the County -- but we can do better. If you haven't already done so, please take a few minutes to make sure you are counted at 2020census.gov.
- Imagine, A Center for Coping With Loss, is offering free virtual support groups on Wednesday evenings at 8:00PM for health care professionals, police officers, mental health professionals, caregivers, and other helpers who are working tirelessly to keep us and our communities safe. To register, visit www.imaginenj.org/first-responders-support-group.html.
- I want to close by putting the Governor's roadmap in some additional context. While he indicated that he hopes we can begin opening in a matter of weeks and not months, I know that it can seem discouraging to carry on like this with the stay at home order, and that we are all suffering from social distancing fatigue -- especially as the end seems in sight.

I'd like to take this opportunity to remind everyone that what you are all doing is working -- and it's working because of our shared commitment. New Jersey hospitals reported the number of patients with confirmed or suspected coronavirus cases dropped for a sixth consecutive day, and hospital discharge numbers statewide continue to exceed admissions. In Overlook Hospital alone, total COVID-19 beds are down from a peak of 311 on April 10, to 194 beds today. There is demonstrable progress as a result of our actions, but we are not yet able to declare our efforts complete.

- Please know that, as you all do your part, we are doing ours with ongoing planning discussions about how to safely reopen all of what makes Westfield dear to us as a community -- when the time is right. I recognize in particular the desire to reopen the parks, and I remain in discussion with Chief Battiloro about how and when we might be able to safely do that. I recognize the frustration of staying at home, and the potential long-term impact on our beloved businesses, but, as the Governor reiterated today, all decisions to lift restrictions must be made on the basis of science, health progress, and common sense. The last thing I want for all of us is to re-open too soon, too broadly, and risk being unnecessarily back in this position again. Let's do this once and do it right. In the meantime, thank you for continuing to put the needs of others above your own.

I will deliver tomorrow's update live at the Town Council meeting via Zoom. If you are an existing Zoom user, you can connect using the following link: <https://bit.ly/TownCouncil4282020>. If new to Zoom, enter 753-829-581 for the Meeting ID under the Join a Meeting prompt. You can always catch the replay on Facebook, YouTube, or TV36.