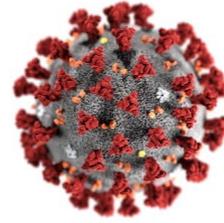




Mayor Brindle's COVID-19 Update November 20, 2020



Today, there were 3,635 new cases of COVID-19 reported in New Jersey, with another 640 still under investigation and 297,370 total cases statewide to date. Union County has reported 25,437 cases in total, with Westfield reporting five new cases through the State reporting system since my last update on Tuesday (none on Wednesday or Thursday, and five today).

I am continuing to use my Friday updates strictly for the purposes of reporting weekly data from the Department of Health, with my more expansive updates to be posted every Tuesday.

From November 13-19, there were 17 cases of COVID-19 reported in Westfield in our official case count. However, the total number of cases received by the Health Department for investigation over the same time period was 83, the highest number of cases in any seven day period since our first case was reported in March. This number reflects the inclusion of rapid test results that are not able to be reported through the State system, which provides Chief Battiloro with the daily numbers that I share.

This week, the Health Department reports that the ages of the 83 cases they received ranged from 2 to 94, broken down as follows:

- Under age 20: 22 cases
- Age 20 to 29: 10 cases
- Age 30 to 39: 9 cases
- Age 40-49: 12 cases
- Age 50-59: 22 cases
- Age 69-69: 4 cases
- Age 70-79: No cases
- Age 80-89: 2 cases
- Age 90 and above: 2 cases

We currently have two residents hospitalized, and local hospitals are reporting an increase in COVID patients admitted. I am also deeply saddened to report the death of a 63 year-old resident, the first COVID fatality we have had since July.

To put additional context around these very disturbing updates, Regional Health Officer Megan Avallone reports that, across the eight towns managed by the Westfield Regional Health Department, there were 315 new cases investigated this week (up from 200 last week). There were also four deaths, which, like Westfield, are the first seen since July. The vast majority of the state, including our region, has entered the high risk matrix level, and the deep concern remains that the upcoming Thanksgiving holiday weekend can result in additional community spread.

The good news is that, as you have likely heard, there are two very promising vaccines that are nearing readiness for distribution. In fact, Governor Murphy stated today that, if approved for emergency use authorization by the FDA, New Jersey could receive its first shipment of vaccines in late December.

While broad distribution will be an ongoing task spanning many months, it is nonetheless very encouraging to know that significant progress is being made.

As we wait for these vaccines, we must continue to be vigilant. I know that COVID fatigue is very real for everyone, but please continue to take all necessary precautions at this critical time. An indoor gathering for Thanksgiving with those who don't live in your home is very strongly discouraged as the rate of transmission continues to remain elevated. These indoor gatherings, multiplied across Thanksgiving tables throughout the area, can have a drastic negative impact on the community spread of this virus. Our collective effort to avoid such risk can make a real difference in helping to stop the spread and keep our schools and businesses open.

Thank you for continuing to do your part.