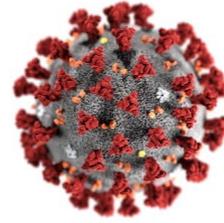




## Mayor Brindle's COVID-19 Update December 1, 2020



### CONFIRMED CASES

- For the month of November, the Department of Health received 248 cases of COVID-19 in Westfield. Of these 248 cases:
  - 129 remain under investigation
  - 37 were unable to be reached
  - 25 had no known exposure
  - 19 had a positive household contact
  - 10 had a known exposure
  - 9 were associated with youth sports
  - 4 were exposed at work
  - 4 were uncooperative
  - 3 were travel associated
  - 3 were college students (exposed at school)
  - 2 were exposed at a party
  - 2 were hospitalized (ages 86 and 61)
  - 1 recently died (age 94)
- Of these 248 cases, 65 were received since my last update a week ago, reflecting, once again, a very high number of weekly cases above the levels seen early in the pandemic. Our official case count provided through the State system, which does not include rapid tests, showed 15 cases in Westfield, underscoring the ongoing disparity that I've previously mentioned between the reporting systems. Going forward, I will only be reporting the Health Department's weekly numbers, inclusive of rapid tests, as they are a more accurate reflection of community spread. Details on the official statewide numbers can always be found on the NJ Department of Health COVID-19 Dashboard.

### STATE AND COUNTY UPDATES

- Governor Murphy re-tightened the limit on outdoor gatherings to 25 individuals – effective 6:00 AM on December 7, with exceptions for religious or political activities, funerals/memorial services, and wedding ceremonies. Outdoor dining is unaffected by this announcement.
- The Governor also announced that all indoor youth and adult sports (not including collegiate-level and professional teams) are being placed on a full pause, effective 6:00AM on December 5 through January 2, in order to help slow the spread related to indoor sports-driven COVID outbreaks.
- New Jersey will no longer utilize previously outlined metrics to inform its travel advisory. All non-essential interstate travel is strongly discouraged, and individuals should continue to follow the State's current guidance until a new policy is issued.

- The New Jersey Department of Health is implementing an enhanced program of testing for all long-term care facility staff, visitors, and residents, with 366,000 rapid tests distributed.
- Due to increased demand for COVID-19 testing, the Union County Drive-in Test Center located at Kean University in Union Township will expand operations to four days a week. The site now operates on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 9:00 - 4:00, and on Thursdays from 9:00 - 2:30. No symptoms or doctor referral is required, but the site is accessible by car only. To make an appointment online visit Union County's new COVID-19 website, [ucnj.org/covid19](http://ucnj.org/covid19), or call 908-518-4307. The Test Center is available to all Union County residents, and to first responders and front line health personnel who work in New Jersey.

## LOCAL UPDATES

- Thank you to all those who sacrificed gathering on Thanksgiving in order to help stop the spread of COVID. If you celebrated Thanksgiving with those from outside your household, please get tested. If the Health Department reaches out to you for the purposes of contact tracing, please cooperate. I was disheartened to hear the statistic at the State level that nearly 70% of individuals refuse to cooperate with contact tracers. Meanwhile, the number of COVID cases at Overlook has increased by more than 40% in just three weeks, and we want to do everything possible to avoid placing additional strain on our health care system. As we continue with the holiday season, I'm asking for your ongoing vigilance at a critical time.
- Thanks to everyone supporting our local businesses by shopping small to kick off the season. With free parking through January 3, gift wrapping at the Downtown Welcome Center (in the former Ann Taylor space), and new online shopping availability through partner Beyond Main ([beyondmain.com/g/downtown-westfield](http://beyondmain.com/g/downtown-westfield)), we are encouraging a huge collective effort by the community to keep holiday spending dollars right here in our fantastic downtown where they are needed most. Don't miss the Cool Carving, Hot Shopping event on Sunday from 12-3 featuring ice sculpting demonstrations, and don't forget to enter your home in the Westfield Wonderland Holiday Light Contest at [westfieldnj.gov/specialevents](http://westfieldnj.gov/specialevents).
- Don't miss the online auction of butterflies from the recent "Art Takes Flight" exhibit, presented by the Westfield Public Arts Commission. The auction of these beautiful creations will be held from December 4-10, and all funds will be used to support future public art initiatives. For more details, to view the items available for auction, and to set up an account for bidding, visit [www.32auctions.com/westfieldbutterflies](http://www.32auctions.com/westfieldbutterflies).
- Join me this Thursday at 12:00 for a Facebook Live session with Town Planner Don Sammet; Phil Abramson from our redevelopment planning firm, Topology; and Richard Heapes from Streetworks Development (part of Hudson's Bay Company, which owns the Lord & Taylor property). Our panel discussion will address how other communities have handled notable inflection points and transformations, the power of community input, and the potential impact of COVID on Westfield's future as we analyze how to best position the Town for success. I'm looking forward to moderating this discussion and hearing from this group of experts and members of the community as we continue to evaluate the best path forward. We are accepting questions in advance at [westfieldnj.gov/FBLive](http://westfieldnj.gov/FBLive), as well as on Facebook during the discussion.

- Lastly, I want to thank everyone who participated in the “Be the Light” fundraising efforts on Sunday night -- from the beautiful luminary displays organized by the Rotary Club, Presbyterian Church, and Westfield United Fund, to watching John Rzeznik’s live stream performance, to donating or auction bidding for hunger relief. The sad reality is that Union County’s number of food insecure residents has increased by 58% due to the pandemic -- a rate that is higher than the national average of 46% and greater than any of New Jersey's neighboring states.

On this Giving Tuesday, please visit [westfieldunitedfund.org](http://westfieldunitedfund.org), which links to the online Be the Light auction site that includes items such as a backyard performance by John, as well as a signed guitar, turntable, and CDs. Donations are also encouraged and accepted. The generosity of our community to combat hunger allows organizations like the Community Food Bank of New Jersey and the Westfield Food Pantry to provide its services to those in need. Many thanks not only to John for his generosity, but also to the event organizers Councilwoman Dawn Mackey, Deirdre Gelinne from the Westfield United Fund, Keith Gibbons from the Westfield Food Pantry, Renee Helfenstein from CFBNJ, and resident Joe Mindak for their tremendous efforts to bring the community together for this important initiative that reflects the true spirit of the holidays. #BeTheLight