



Mayor Brindle's COVID-19 Update March 19, 2021



The Department of Health reports 75 new cases of COVID-19 in Westfield from March 12-18. Of these cases:

- 21 had no known exposure
- 18 were unable to be reached
- 9 had a positive household contact
- 10 had a known exposure
- 5 are still under investigation
- 5 refused to be interviewed
- 4 were diagnosed in previous months but reported this week
- 1 was exposed at work
- 1 was associated with high school sports
- 1 was hospitalized (43 year-old male)

The ages of this week's cases ranged from 2 to 67 years old, broken down as follows:

- Age 9 and under: 7 cases
- Age 10-19: 21 cases
- Age 20-29: 8 cases
- Age 30-39: 10 cases
- Age 40-49: 12 cases
- Age 50-59: 13 cases
- Age 60-69: 4 cases
- Age 70-79: no cases
- Age 80-89: no cases
- Age 90 and above: no cases

Regional Health Officer Megan Avallone reports that, for the third consecutive week, New Jersey ranks highest in the nation in per capita confirmed COVID cases. Unfortunately, this week has shown an increase of high activity statewide, including our region (Central East region) -- although Westfield remains categorized as moderate activity. The most highly impacted age group remains between 10 and 19 this week, representing 28% of the newly reported cases.

Yesterday, the New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association (NJSIAA) announced that 25% of the total cases associated with high school sports since the beginning of the school year were reported last week, a trend that health officials are watching closely. Unfortunately, this dynamic is accompanied by the Health Department seeing increased levels of noncooperation with contact tracing and mandated quarantines for exposed student athletes. Please, if your child has had any confirmed exposure, do your part by cooperating with health officials so that we can continue to identify and stem community spread.

The State's seven-day average for new confirmed cases is up 11% from a week ago and 22% from a month ago -- the highest level since February 12. The statewide rate of transmission has increased to 1.06.

More than 2.2 million New Jersey residents have received at least one dose of the vaccine (24.5% of the total population), and just over one million have been fully vaccinated (12.2% of the population).

In Union County, 116,469 (20.6% of the population) have received one dose, and 56,425 (10% of the population) have been fully vaccinated. 44% of the Union County residents that have been vaccinated are 65 years of age and older.

Lastly, many of you have seen today's updated guidance from the CDC regarding three feet of distance within schools, versus six feet. While this is very encouraging news in terms of the nation's progress to reopen as many schools as safety permits, it is the New Jersey State Department of Health that issues guidance under which our schools must comply as they make decisions regarding in-person instruction.

With our cases up more than 50% over last week's, we must stay vigilant -- particularly due to the higher transmission risk posed by variants of the virus. We have a great (and hopefully extended) stretch of warmer temperatures ahead of us, so please keep all gatherings outdoors and safely distanced.

A long awaited spring arrives tomorrow -- enjoy your weekend!