

# COVID-19 Q & A

October 13, 2020

## Public Communications

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Q: Why doesn't the health department provide COVID updates over the weekend/holidays?

A: We are a small health department, with a limited staff. Unlike response efforts for other potential public health emergencies - like winter storms, power outages, or other time-limited events, our response to COVID-19 is a marathon endeavor. In order to give our staff much needed breaks, we have had to rotate individuals to cover our weekend and holiday hours, flexing to bring in more staff when necessary. Because we are not working with a full crew during these times, some of the less critical activities have to wait while we focus our attention on case investigation, case and contact monitoring and other critical response efforts. While public information is important, we have to balance that against activities that are essential – like isolating positive cases and quarantining contacts. When events occur that require public notification, we do release that information, either via a press release, Facebook post or other update, even on weekends or holidays. If we learn additional information that necessitates further public awareness, we absolutely issue subsequent updates. As we work through outbreak or cluster events, it's important to note that anyone that needs to hear from us, will, regardless of the time of day or day of week. In our Friday posts, we try to remind everyone that our next update will occur on the next business day.

## Lee House Cluster – Port Henry, New York

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Q: Will there be a testing event for the Lee House cluster in Port Henry?

A: The Essex County Health Department will be offering a testing event on Thursday, October 15, 2020 from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. for all Lee House residents and any contacts of the positive cases associated with this cluster. ECHD is reaching out to all those at risk of exposure to notify them of this event and recommend that they seek testing – either at this event or through their health care provider. These will not be rapid (15 minute) tests

Q: Will all individuals under quarantine due to the Lee House cluster be required to get a COVID-19 test?

A: We are recommending testing to all individuals at risk of exposure and we are offering a means for them to receive free testing at the event on Thursday. We cannot mandate testing for these individuals. It is important to note that a viral diagnostic test provides information about the point in time that the test was taken. Studies show that the incubation period for COVID-19 is anywhere from 2 to 14 days after infection. For example, people exposed to the virus can test negative on day 5 of quarantine and can test positive on day 9, which is why the quarantine period lasts a full 14 days from exposure. A negative test result does not negate the need to quarantine due to this reason.

Q: People have been seen coming and going from the Lee House – isn't the building closed to visitors, with all residents quarantined?

A: The Essex County Board of Supervisors, serving as the Essex County Board of Health requested the immediate suspension of all visitors at the Lee House apartments for a period of at least 14 days from October 11, 2020 forward. This suspension does not apply to residents requiring essential health care

services. All appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) for these health care workers will be required. To date, there are three confirmed cases in residents of the Lee House apartments who have been issued isolation orders, with another 3 residents identified as contacts who have been issued quarantine orders. The remaining residents are not subject to isolation or quarantine at this time and they are permitted to come and go without restriction. Several non-resident close/proximate contacts of the positive cases have been identified and these individuals have also been issued quarantine orders.

## Crown Point Central School

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Q: Are there additional updates about the Crown Point Central School case?

A: No further positive cases associated with Crown Point Central School staff, students, or families have been reported to the Essex County Health Department. We are continuing to perform daily monitoring for the positive case and all contacts that were potentially exposed.

Q: Where can I get testing for my child, myself, or other family member?

A: To find testing sites near you, visit <https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/find-test-site-near-you>. A drive-through state testing site is available at 213 Connecticut Road, Plattsburgh, NY from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., 7 days a week. For more information on this testing site, visit [www.cvph.org/Patients-and-Visitors/Patients/COVID-Testing](http://www.cvph.org/Patients-and-Visitors/Patients/COVID-Testing).

## Isolation and Quarantine

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Q: Why do I have to quarantine if I wasn't ever within 6 feet of a positive case?

A: Close contacts are defined as anyone who was within 6 feet of a positive case for longer than 10 minutes, during the 2 days prior to the case exhibiting symptoms (or testing positive) through the time that they got a positive result and were then isolated. Other exposures include individuals who were in the same indoor room/vehicle/area as a positive case, at a distance greater than 6 feet, for an hour or more. With the second scenario, these exposures can be cumulative. For example, your child rode a school bus for 20 minutes each day for 3 days with another child who later tested positive for COVID-19. The case was infectious during all 3 days that they rode the bus. Your child would be subject to a quarantine order.

Q: What is the difference between isolation and quarantine?

A: The health department isolates all positive cases for a minimum of 10 days (from first symptom or positive test) and quarantines all contact for 14 days from last exposure. Isolation separates sick people with a contagious disease from people who are not sick. Quarantine separates and restricts the movement of people who were exposed to a contagious disease to see if they become sick. For more information on the isolation and quarantine process, visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/quarantine/index.html>

Q: What are the requirements of quarantine?

A: Quarantining requires that exposed individuals stay home and monitor their health for 14 days after last contact with a person who has COVID-19. Those exposed should watch for fever (100.4°F), cough,

shortness of breath, or other symptoms of COVID-19. The health department will check in with all quarantined persons daily to determine if symptoms are developing. A person on quarantine is not permitted to leave their property, even on solo trips or for necessities. The health department will work to ensure that basic needs are met for anyone in quarantine, should the need arise. Persons deemed essential by their employer and in consultation with the health department could be permitted to work while on quarantine, provided that they are not symptomatic – refer to:

[https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2020/04/doh\\_covid19\\_essentialpersonnelreturntowork\\_rev2\\_033120.pdf](https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2020/04/doh_covid19_essentialpersonnelreturntowork_rev2_033120.pdf)