

## NEW JERSEY COVID-19 UPDATE

Governor Murphy's COVID-19 Mitigation Press Conference, October 5<sup>th</sup>, 2020

### Governor Phil Murphy

#### *President Trump*

- The President & his staff acted recklessly in coming to New Jersey knowing that they had been exposed to someone with a confirmed positive test. We hope that no confirmed cases come out of the event in Bedminster. This is a matter of humanity, but also of leadership by example.
  - Contact tracing efforts are underway following last week's fundraising event with the President at Trump National Golf Club in Bedminster. We are tracing:
    - 206 attendees at the two separate events
    - 19 staff members who were involved in both events
  - Working with the CDC, we've contacted out-of-state attendees.
  - The NJ Department of Health, in partnership with the Somerset County Health Department and local officials in Bedminster, is leading contact tracing efforts within New Jersey.
- We continue to send our best wishes to President Trump, the First Lady, Governor Christie and all who have tested positive over the weekend.
- We continue to investigate reports that suggest the Bedminster event may not have complied with our current rules, which may have put others at risk. Any failures to comply with our emergency orders will be referred to the NJ Attorney General for a follow up.

#### *Halloween*

- The NJ Department of Health is releasing guidance today for local officials, schools, and outside organizations and businesses to help ensure a safe Halloween for our communities.
- You may wish to dress as a knucklehead this Halloween, but we don't want anyone to act like one.

## **Child Care**

- The NJ Department of Children and Families is creating emergency regulations to allow centers to operate legally as child-care services for the duration of the public health emergency or until the end of the school year, whichever comes first.
- The NJ Department of Human Services has increased the income threshold for families seeking child care tuition assistance during remote learning school hours from \$75,000 to \$150,000.
  - This will allow more families to receive the support they need to afford child care.
  - Apply: [ChildCareNJ.gov/covid19](https://ChildCareNJ.gov/covid19)

## ***The Numbers***

New cases: 522

New statewide total: 208,713

Rate of transmission 10/3: 1.27

NJ spot positivity rate 10/1: 2.62%

Hospitalized: 507

Lab-confirmed positives: 320

Persons under investigation: 187

Requiring intensive care: 102

Require ventilators: 34

New deaths: 2

New statewide total deaths: 14,351

Total additional probable deaths: 1,787

## ***Some individuals lost to COVID-19 honored today***

- We remember Dr. Barry and Sharon Sakowitz, both New Yorkers by birth and New Jerseyans by choice. They died only four days apart, and cherished every moment spent with their family and friends. May both of their memories be a blessing.
  - Sharon was a career nurse, later working as a nursing educator. She was a leader in her congregation at Temple Emanuel of the Pascack Valley. She was a member of book clubs and needlepoint groups, and never turned down a game of mahjong.
  - Dr. Barry Sakowitz practiced medicine right up until covid-19 meant he could no longer see patients. Alongside his brother, he helped establish the respiratory therapy department at The Valley Hospital. He enjoyed fishing, playing bridge and chess, and cheering for the Giants
- We remember James Hemler. Jim took tremendous joy in family visits, vacations, and celebrations. He loved getting together with his friends for card games, rounds of golf, and pizza parties on the beach. He never passed up a chance to watch Notre Dame play.

## ***Economic Development Authority***

- Desi Saran founded Sweetberry in 2017, and worked with the NJ EDA to receive grant funding and new capital to ensure continuance of the brand during #COVID19. We're glad he chose to make New Jersey the home base for his businesses and his vision.

## Department of Health Commissioner Judy Persichilli

### ***Ocean County and Lakewood***

- 353 of cases reported over the weekend were from ocean County, and the majority of those cases are in the 30-49 age group followed by the 18-29 age group.
- Today, there are 119 cases from Ocean County, 86 of which are from Lakewood.
- As of September 30<sup>th</sup>, the positivity rate in ocean County was 7.2% and the Lakewood positivity is down from 28% to 19.51%.
- We have increased testing sites in Lakewood, and tomorrow testing is available at the Lakewood Municipal lot from 9-3.

### ***Multi-System Inflammatory Syndrome***

- We now have 58 cases. No new cases since last report.
  - The ages are between 1 – 18.
  - None are currently hospitalized.
  - All have either tested positive for covid19 or had positive antibody tests.
  - There have been no deaths.
  - Breakdown of race and ethnicity:
    - White 17%
    - Black 35%
    - Hispanic 39%
    - Asian 6%
    - Other 4%

### ***Hospital and Resource usage***

- 33% of critical care patients are on ventilators.
- Our spot positivity rate in testing is for October 1 is 2.62%. North was 2.18%, Central was 3.30% and the South 2.56%.

## **Deaths**

- Demographic breakdown of deaths:
  - White 54.1%
  - Black 18.3%
  - Hispanic 20.3%
  - Asian 5.5%
  - Other 1.9%

## **State Police Superintendent Colonel Pat Callahan**

### **Compliance**

- Cuban Pete's in Montclair was well in excess of the capacity limit.
- In Guttenberg, Casamos 2000 also exceeded capacity.

## **Questions from the media**

*Governor Cumoo is shutting schools in NYC hot spots, are you setting parameters for doing the same in Lakewood?*

**Murphy:** We reserve the right to take similar steps in New Jersey. A blunt, statewide instrument looks less required at the moment as opposed to scalpel approaches. Those options remain on the table.

*This morning you said you "need more" from the federal side in terms of contact tracing, what did you mean by that?*

**Murphy:** I would say, in addition to calling the trip in the face of facts "reckless" we just haven't had as robust a partnership as we want. The lead has been predominantly New Jersey on this. The list of attendees was a national list. It's at a moment like that you need as robust a federal response as we have had at the state level. We needed that trip not to happen, and now we need more assistance.

*With the election about a month away, there still isn't any info about how Perth Amboy is doing their runoff, when do you intend to tell them?*

**Murphy:** No news on Perth Amboy.

*Have you read or been briefed on the contents of the report from the investigation of the nepotistic hiring at the SDA?*

**Murphy:** I have been briefed on the report. While I do not agree with all of their conclusions, I look forward to working with all the parties to continue to improve the SDA.

*Are you aware of a post office issue in West Orange and North Arlington where some batches of mail were dumped in the dumpster?*

**Platkin:** We were informed by the postal service and the mail was recovered from the trash receptacle and has been put back in the mail stream.

*Should you or shouldn't you have a communal bowl for Halloween?*

**Murphy:** You should not have a communal bowl.

*The DOL said that the \$300 unemployment benefit would be paid in October, any updates on that?*

**Murphy:** No update here yet.

*Rick Meta said there was no reason for him to quarantine after attending Trump's even and that you are fear mongering, what is your reaction to that?*

**Murphy:** I think that statement should disqualify him from seeking public office.

*It appears that the white house isn't going to contact trace attendees because no one spent more than 15 minutes within 6 feet of the president, has the RNC or white house provided you with more than names and emails? How many guests were from New Jersey?*

**Murphy:** We are working to contact trace as best as we can. Half of the attendees were from New Jersey and all of the staff were.

What specific guidelines were allegedly violated at Bedminster?

**Murphy:** Potentially too many people indoors and buffet-like food setups.

*With the uptick in cases, do you see a second wave coming? If so, is the state prepared?*

**Murphy:** I wouldn't be able to say if this is a continuation of the first wave or a second wave. Are we prepared? I think we are but the last thing we're going to do is spike any footballs. We are building towards a strategic stockpile of PPE and ventilators. We've kept the bed capacity in the hospitals and the field medical stations. Testing, we are among the highest per capita testing capacity states in the country and we aim to keep it that way.

**Dr. Tan:** What we are concerned about is the trend over time and who is impacted by the illness. There has been a changing demographic of who is getting ill. We were concerned about older individuals in March, right now we are starting to see a lot more cases among younger individuals here in New Jersey and in the country and our region. It's important to look at this information.

*How did you find out about the President's positive diagnosis of covid?*

**Murphy:** I found out about it through a combination of press and emails. We immediately reached out to both family members and white house staff to express our prayers and best wishes and also to find a way to work together on contact tracing.

*There has been a lot of confusion over when someone tests negative, can you explain a bit more about how someone can test negative and still have the coronavirus inside them?*

**Dr. Tan:** Sometimes if you get tested very quickly after possible exposure you might not be able to pick up the fact you have an infection. The reason why we are concerned about when people are tested and what kind of test is because it can determine whether or not it is detected. That's why you should wait 5-7 days after exposure to get a test. We recognize that the incubation period is 1-14 days, but we are seeing that the median time that people start to test positive is the 5-7 day window.

*You said you are considering a scalpel approach, what might those restrictions look like and have you spoken to local community leaders to that end?*

**Murphy:** Anything we would do would be done in touch with community leadership. We have been in constant contact with those leaders in faith, government, and education. Any steps we would take would be assessed jointly with them.

*Do you think that Trump testing positive have put a new focus to covid-19, especially here in New Jersey?*

**Murphy:** I think it has. We hope everyone gets better, and we have reached out to everyone. There is no silver lining to loss of life. Having said that, I hope people take it seriously. The evidence is so overwhelming what works and what puts you at risk. Indoors, close proximity, no face covering with folks who are covid-positive is a bad cocktail.

*Can you talk about your philosophy for there to be or not to be a bear hunt in new Jersey?*

**Murphy:** My philosophy has been that there has to be non-lethal ways to manage the issue. Other states that look like us have done it. We need to be able to protect public safety and be humane, and we believe after this year we will be able to achieve that balance.



*You said the federal government needs to do more to help you with contact tracing, are they doing anything?*

**Murphy:** I'm using the "federal government" in a broad strokes term. We got contact information from the RNC on Friday. We've been on with the White House since that morning. Dr. Tan is on regularly with the CDC. Those are the national bodies we have been in most regular contact with. Again, we need to see more. I don't know how else to put it. We are doing everything we can.

Antonia Spano

Director of Legislative Affairs

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