

NEW JERSEY COVID-19 UPDATE

Governor Murphy's COVID-19 Mitigation Press Conference, December 18th, 2020

Governor Phil Murphy

Vaccines

- CVS and Walgreens will be coordinating with enrolled long term care facilities to begin on-site clinics beginning December 28th for vaccinations.
- We are on-schedule to open six vaccine “mega sites” across the state in early January to vaccinate frontline health care workers who are a part of phase 1A.
 - Bergen County: Meadowlands Complex
 - Morris County: Rockaway Townsquare Mall
 - Middlesex County: New Jersey Convention and Exposition Center
 - Burlington County: Moorestown Mall
 - Gloucester County: Rowan College South Jersey
 - Atlantic County: Atlantic City Convention Center
- We anticipate these sites being able to accommodate those in phase 1B, essential workers, before moving to the 1C category of adults 65+ with high-risk medical conditions.
- We are currently working on opening 200+ satellite vaccination sites, which will include:
 - Individual hospitals
 - Federally qualified health centers
 - Urgent care centers
 - Chain pharmacies
 - Localized sites created in coordination with county & local health departments
- Our expected vaccine deliveries are less than originally anticipated, and we have not gotten a straight answer as to why that is. Pfizer has said publicly that they have no idea why the amounts are lower.
 - We have a white house VTC on Monday so I suspect we will learn more then.

Schools

- Schools Update
 - 10 new in-school outbreaks were confirmed over the past week, leading to 40 new cases of coronavirus infection
 - There have been 428 total cases of in-school transmission from 98 total outbreaks since the start of the school year

The Numbers

New cases today: 3,975

New statewide total: 423,226

Rate of transmission 12/16: 1.03

NJ spot positivity rate 12/14: 10.08%

Currently Hospitalized: 3,582

COVID-positive hospitalized in the last 24 hours: 397

Patient discharges in the last 24 hours: 461

Requiring intensive care: 715

Require ventilators: 480

New deaths: 44

New statewide total deaths: 16,216

Total additional probable deaths: 1,908

Some individuals lost to COVID-19 honored today

- We remember Ahmad Shivwdayal, Jerry Seeraj, and Altaf Seeraj. Ahmad and Jerry were brothers-in-law. Altaf was Jerry's son. All three passed away from covid-19. They were proud Guyanese immigrants who came to the U.S. more than 40 years ago.
- Ahmad and Jerry met while working at the former Nanes Metal Finishing Company in Newark. Jerry ended up marrying Ahmad's sister, Meshah. Ahmad later found work as a truck driver, while Jerry went on to work at Flextronics in Parsippany.
- Altaf was 10 years old when his family left Guyana for New Jersey. He was an active and kind adult. Within a span of 12 days, all three passed away from this virus.

Labor

- Just over 16,000 initial unemployment claims were submitted last week.
- More than \$20 billion has been released to workers during this pandemic.
- The Department is planning to process another round of FEMA Lost Wages Assistance Payments tonight, delivering payments to 10,000 newly eligible claimants.

Economic Development Authority

- On Wednesday, the NJ EDA launched its new, \$2 million Sustain and Serve NJ grant program.
- Organizations that purchase meals from participating restaurants for distribution to residents will receive direct support to pay those food expenses.
- More: [Business.nj.gov/covid](https://business.nj.gov/covid)

Department of Health Commissioner Judy Persichilli

Vaccine

- Our goal is to vaccinate 70% of the eligible adult population in 6 months, 4.7 million individuals, and we know that this is an ambitious goal.
- We also know that the demand will be higher than the supply of vaccines, so we are working in phases to prioritize certain individuals for vaccinations.
 - As of today, 2,149 healthcare workers have received dose 1 of their vaccine.
- More information about the mega sites will be given next week.
- After Phase 1, which includes 1A, 1B and 1C, the general population can begin to be vaccinated.
- The previously expected second batch of Pfizer doses for next week was expected to be 86,775, but now we are anticipating only 53,625, a reduction of 38%.
 - The total for December was expected to be 273,375, but now we are anticipating 183,300, a reduction of 33%.
- We also heard updated guidance on Moderna.
 - We anticipated 492,075 doses of both combined Pfizer and Moderna vaccines, but now the CDC is telling us we will get 392,800, a reduction of 20%.
- The department will be communicating with groups on the timing of this phased implementation plan as the vaccine dose numbers are updated.
- As the availability of vaccine increases, information about sign ups for the general public will be made available.

Multi-System Inflammatory Syndrome in Children]

- We now have 65 cases. No new reports.
 - The ages are between 1 – 18.
 - All have either tested positive for covid19 or had positive antibody tests.
 - There have been no deaths.
- Breakdown of race and ethnicity:
 - White 20%
 - Black 33%
 - Hispanic 36%
 - Asian 6%
 - Other 6%

Testing and Hospital Data

- 67% of those in critical care are on ventilators.
- December 10th positivity rate 10.95%, North - 10.43%, Central - 10.90%, South 12.39%.

Superintendent Pat Callahan

EO Compliance

- 6 EO violations, including 1 in Paterson and 4 in Newark and one in Gloucester.

Questions from the media

Why is New Jersey starting vaccinations for nursing homes a week later than other states?

Murphy: We start nursing homes with the cooperation of CVS and Walgreens.

Persichilli: In order to start on the 21st there was the deadline of the 7th for input of all the facilities. We have over 650, and we missed that date by a day. They wouldn't allow us to start earlier. It was missed just because of the volume of information that had to be inputted.

Why do you think Republicans in congress don't want state aid?

Murphy: I can't get in the heads of members of the republican party as to why they would feel this way. History will be extraordinarily unkind to these people, particularly to McConnell. It's just clear as day and it shouldn't be partisan. We need a big moment to match this pandemic moment, and I think the number is 3 to 4 trillion that we need, and they are spending so much time and effort to make it lower than 1 trillion. This has nothing to do with red and blue states or legacy issues. I think those folks will pay a big price reputationally.

Did you misjudge how much opposition there would be to the tax incentive bill you worked on with the legislature?

Murphy: Please look at the growing and very long list of folks who have put statements out or testified in support of this. I thank the advocates who have been with us every step of the way. Every bit of that is inside of these bills and then some. It's capped, it has an inspector general so it will be monitored like a hawk, huge impact and monies towards neighborhoods that have historically been ignored. Main street, food deserts, rocket fuel for the innovation economy. It's exactly what we had hoped for and then some. I would say I thank the folks, even the ones who aren't seeing it that way right now, for standing with us and advocating for the changes this bill happily includes. This will have an enormous positive impact on rebuilding our economy as we crawl out of this pandemic.

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