

12.28.20 Notes from the Governor's Briefing:

COVID:

- Day 303
- Statewide rate without micro-clusters: 7.83%
- Statewide rate with micro-clusters: 8.33%
- Micro-cluster rate: 9.66%
- 124,866 tests conducted
- 114 fatalities
- 7,559 hospitalizations, up 376
- 1,222 ICU patient, up 35
- 717 intubations, up 30
- Gov. referenced spike in numbers over the weekend, said it is unclear why a dramatic increase occurred, state is looking into it
- One theory is that it is due to lower testing numbers, many people were tested prior to Christmas, those being tested over the weekend were only those experiencing symptoms, so sample can be skewed
- Gov. noted the number of people being tested went down by almost half
- Supporting this theory is that many tests were coming from urgent care clinics over the weekend
- Numbers over the next few days will provide clearer picture

Hospitalizations by Region:

- Finger Lakes: 945 (0.08%)
- Western NY: 494 (0.04%)
- Southern Tier: 183 (0.03%)
- Mid Hudson: 852 (0.04%)
- NYC: 2,631 (0.03%)
- Long Island: 1,334 (0.05%)
- Capital Region: 394 (0.04%)
- Central NY: 410 (0.05%)
- Mohawk Valley: 247 (0.05%)
- North Country: 69 (0.02%)

Positivity Rate by Region:

Finger Lakes: 8.55%
Western NY: 6.43%
Southern Tier: 3.37%
Mid Hudson: 6.29%
NYC: 4.82%
Long Island: 6.70%
Capital Region: 8.48%
Central NY: 6.69%
Mohawk Valley: 9.26%
North Country: 6.88%
Manhattan: 2.83%
Staten Island: 6.03%
Brooklyn: 5.00%
Queens: 5.68%
Bronx: 5.71%

Vaccinations:

- 140,000 residents have received first dose of vaccine
- 259,000 additional doses expected this week
- Gov. stressed state is ensuring equitable allocation of the vaccine to each region
- Urgent care employees, local health department staff, OASAS facilities will start receiving vaccines this week
- Current priority vaccinations will also continue
- Next week, state expects ambulatory care workers, public health workers to start receiving as well
- On reports of possible fraud by a healthcare provider: state police is investigating and will be referring the case to the AG's Office
- Gov. will sign EO today making it clear that vaccination priorities will be followed and fraud will be prosecuted
- EO will include that providers can be fined up to \$1 million, and all state licenses can be revoked
- Housing eviction moratorium will be extended by EO today, Gov. said he has been working with the legislature as well, and he will be signing the bill once passed
- EO also being signed today to withhold pay increases for all statewide elected officials, which Gov. called "just the right thing to do"

Bills Games:

- Bills and DOH still working together to develop a pilot plan for allowing fans at playoffs games
- Gov. said additional details will be coming soon
- Gov. noted Western NY has reduced positivity rate significantly in the last month

Q&A:

- On ParCare fraud investigation and the company's claims that NYS DOH sent vaccines to them and there is no fraud present:
 - Gov. said vaccine was possibly obtained through false representations, and may not have been dispensed in accordance with the law
 - Gov. said the state police believe there is enough evidence for a criminal investigation
 - Dr. Zucker added ParCare fraudulently completed form attesting they were a qualified health center, they moved the vaccine which Zucker called "inappropriate", and it is asserted they administered it to individuals not on the priority vaccination list
 - De Rosa added that in addition to EO being signed today, falsifying business records can result in up to a year in prison

- On the federal COVID relief bill, and how the state will distribute rent relief funds:
 - Gov. said more detail is needed on how much will be received, what the federal regulations will be
 - Mujica said this was just announced last week, state will develop a plan once clear guidance is received from feds

- On why the state stopped releasing zoning metrics:
 - Rhodes said website has zones listed, updates will be added on daily basis

- On any other reports of fraud with vaccinations:
 - Gov. said ParCare is "the only case we're at liberty to speak about now", but added fraud should be expected with any commodity

- On Parcare investigations, how many individuals will be charged, and whether those who received the vaccine through ParCare will get their second dose

- Gov. cited ongoing investigation, said some facts cannot be disclosed at this time
- Gov. added that both the organization and the vaccine recipients can be involved in fraud
- Dr. Zucker said public health is priority, state will make sure those who need vaccines will receive them

- Follow- up on additional fraud cases:

- Gov. said NYS DOH, IG, and AG are "constantly" looking for instances of fraud
- So far, criminal fraud has been alleged only at ParCare