

12.30.20 Notes from the Governor's Briefing:

COVID:

- Day 305
- Statewide rate without micro-clusters: 8.36%
- Statewide rate with micro-clusters: 8.66%
- Micro-cluster rate: 9.47%
- 154,949 tests conducted
- 144 fatalities
- 7,892 hospitalizations, up 78
- 1,250 ICU patients, up 26
- 702 intubations, up 9

Hospitalizations by Region:

- Finger Lakes: 959 (0.08%)
- Western NY: 520 (0.04%)
- Southern Tier: 196 (0.03%)
- Mid Hudson: 906 (0.04%)
- Central NY: 404 (0.05%)
- NYC: 2,772 (0.03%)
- Long Island: 1,384 (0.05%)
- Capital Region: 404 (0.04%)
- Mohawk Valley: 273 (0.06%)
- North Country: 74 (0.02%)

Positivity Rate by Region:

- Finger Lakes: 8.80%
- Western NY: 6.82%
- Southern Tier: 4.05%
- Mid Hudson: 6.68%
- Central NY: 7.29%
- NYC: 5.28%
- Long Island: 7.49%
- Capital Region: 9.09%
- Mohawk Valley: 9.36%
- North Country: 7.46%
- Manhattan: 3.05%
- Staten Island: 6.57%
- Brooklyn: 5.44%
- Queens: 6.16%
- Bronx: 6.26%

2021 and Bills Playoff Games:

- Focus in 2021 will be balancing keeping economy going while containing virus, administering vaccine
- State will be piloting a testing plan to guide business re-openings, which will begin with Bills playoffs games
- DOH, Bills, and NFL have agreed that 6,700 fans will be allowed at the first Bills playoff game
- Masks required, and every fan will be tested prior to the game, and contact traced after the game
- No tailgating or other events permitted
- Dr. Zucker added stadium staff will be monitoring entries and exits, and will remove anyone without a documented negative test
- NYS DOH will be overseeing contact tracing after the game
- Bills owners Kim and Terry Pegula joined the briefing virtually

New COVID Strain:

- Over 4,300 tests conducted, new strain has not been found in NY

- According to CDC, new strain has been detected in Colorado
- Gov. said he is extending the law providing death benefits for families of healthcare workers who died as a result of pandemic, will be extended 30 days

Announcements:

- Empire State Trail opens tomorrow - 750 mile trail from Manhattan to Canadian border, and from Buffalo to Albany
- Daniel Patrick Moynihan Train Hall ribbon cutting occurred this morning

Q&A:

- On Bills pilot testing plan, and how this might apply to indoor events:
 - Gov. said challenge is that vaccine will take several months to reach critical mass, the economy cannot be closed until then
 - Pilot program is examining how testing can be used to keep businesses running, but is outdoors and is a controlled venue
 - Gov. said if the pilot program is successful, other venues will be considered, but indoor events require additional consideration
- On Congresswoman Ocasio-Cortez's tweet that Gov. should include small businesses in eviction moratorium EO:
 - Gov. said he agrees, acknowledged the legislature passed a residential tenant eviction moratorium, but the bill does not protect commercial tenants
 - Gov. said another loophole in the bill is that residential tenants are not protected from late fees and penalties, which Gov. called "extortion"
 - Gov. said legislation is needed to address these issues
- On whether any refusals have been documented amongst those being vaccinated:
 - Dr. Zucker said no data on this yet, but they have asked providers for the information
 - The nursing home vaccination program is federally run, the state has not received information on this yet, either
- On data on nursing home deaths having not been released to the public, yet Buffalo Bills games have been given priority from DOH:
 - Gov. said the pilot program is focused on creating guidance to keep businesses open and the economy running through the use of rapid testing
- On original micro-cluster zones and how those zones will be impacted by new zoning metrics:
 - Gov. said despite orange zone restrictions, rates are continuing to increase in some regions
 - Gov. noted that restrictions are less effective now because spread is coming from small gatherings in homes
- On when the state will make a decision on future Bills games beyond playoffs:
 - Gov. said state will determine after the first pilot game depending on compliance, contact tracing