

3.22.21

Notes from Governor Cuomo's conference call:

COVID:

- 4.1% statewide positivity rate
- 3.2 positivity rate on seven-day average
- 46 deaths
- 4,400 hospitalizations
- 885 ICU patients
- 576 intubations

Positivity Rate by Region:

- Mid Hudson: 4.6%
- Long Island: 4.4%
- NYC: 4.0%
- Western NY: 2.3%
- Capital Region: 1.9%
- Finger Lakes: 1.7%
- Mohawk Valley: 1.7%
- North Country: 1.4%
- Central NY: 0.9%
- Southern Tier: 0.5%

- Queens: 4.5%
- Bronx: 4.3%
- Staten Island: 4.3%
- Brooklyn: 3.9%
- Manhattan: 2.4%

Additional COVID variants:

- Brazilian variant first discovered at Mt. Sinai, verified by Wadsworth lab
- Patient is 90 year old who has not traveled
- Zucker added there is evidence of increase in transmissibility, potential for reduced efficacy of vaccine, more severe symptoms
- Zucker urged vaccination compliance

Vaccinations:

- 7.7 million total doses administered so far
- AstraZeneca vaccine up for approval by FDA
- Allocation from federal government currently flat, but will increase in the coming weeks, especially if AstraZeneca is approved
- Gov. said this will shift challenges from resulting from supply to potentially result from distribution
- Gov. said faith-based organizations are asked to partner with local health providers to act as vaccination sites
- Eligibility will expand tomorrow to anyone over 50 years of age
- Equity is still a problem for Black and Latino communities
- Gov. said the states continues to address this, utilizes pop-up vaccine sites

Reopening:

- Connecticut lifted restrictions on indoor dining, NY and NJ still at 50% capacity, which Gov. said he is confident in
- Fitness centers in NYC will reopen today
- Gov. added the legislature can reverse any order at any point

Budget:

- Mujica said legislature passed one house bills last week, conference committees began to meet
- Both house bills were reviewed by DOB
- Mujica said the executive budget was done during uncertainty on whether federal aid would be received

- Executive has been meeting with legislature, have identified over \$5 billion in resources which will restore all the reductions proposed by executive budget
- An additional \$2.5 billion in revenue available compared with consensus forecast
- Mujica stated there will be no cuts, no significant tax increases so additions to budget are being considered
- DOB will work with houses this week on that
- One time resources also identified for expenses related to COVID and the recovery
- Gov. repeated in addition to restoring cuts, there will be funding for one time COVID costs: rental and small business assistance, unemployment assistance, which is largely met by additional federal resources
- Additional needs identified by legislature beyond COVID response will be considered

Q&A:

Gov. began by stating he would not be addressing any topics under investigation by the AG or Assembly

On whether eligibility is expanding too quickly for the supply available:

- Gov. said enough allocation still not available, citing 2 million of 15 million New Yorkers vaccinated to date
- Gov. stated the allocation from federal government should double in the next few weeks

- Added that expanding eligibility allows for an appointment to be made, which will be scheduled weeks in advance when doses will be available

On legislature's nursing home bill currently on Gov.'s desk:

- Garvey said they will be expanding visitation to adhere with CDC and CMS guidance and will evaluate the legislature's bill in light of that guidance

- Zucker confirmed DOH is currently reviewing the guidance

On whether state will change guidance on schools to align with CDC guidance changes:

- Zucker said CDC has specific zoning requirements DOH is reviewing
- Gov.: CDC guidance goes from 6 feet to 3 feet but is not universal, depends on transmission rate in that school and region

On whether school districts can change policies without state approval:

- Garvey said state guidance says local districts could allow less than 6 ft if physical barriers exist between students
- They are reviewing to decide whether to align with CDC
- Garvey said further modifications may be needed to comply with CDC guidance

On allegations against Tom Reed and whether candidates should not seek office when these allegations are made:

- Gov. said he has no comment, it's up to Mr. Reed to decide

On updates on racial disparity study:

- Gov. said there are updates on this almost weekly
- White population is generally vaccinated at higher rate than other populations
- DeRosa said Malatras is working on this, and the press office will release the information publicly