



# Columbia County Board of Supervisors

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**Matt B. Murell**  
Chairman

**Kelly S. Baccaro**  
Clerk

Thursday, October 15, 2020

## CHAIRMAN'S PRESS RELEASE

### FIVE HOSPITALIZED FROM GHENT ASSISTED LIVING OUTBREAK

The Ghent Assisted Living Facility has experienced an outbreak of COVID-19 that finds five residents hospitalized, Columbia County Department of Health Director Jack Mabb said Thursday. One resident that had been hospitalized has since died.

Currently, 10 residents have tested positive for the virus, five of whom are now in the hospital, one in the ICU. Director Mabb said three staff members at the facility have also tested positive.

"More tests are pending," he added.

In addition, six staff members at the Brookwood Secure Center in Claverack have tested positive. Three are Columbia County residents, one lives in Greene County, one lives in Albany and another lives in Schenectady. One female student has tested positive.

The county DOH reports 61 individuals are currently under mandatory quarantine.

"This recent outbreak shows that the virus is alive and well in the community, and it can have a serious impact on people," said Director Mabb. "People have been asking if this is the second or third wave of the virus. To me, the virus never went away. It seems we're seeing positive test results every morning these days."

"Recently, we had a 10-day break when there were no reported positives," said Columbia County Board of Supervisors Chairman Matt Murell. "I think that was mostly a result of good fortune and that most county residents continue to remain vigilant about hand washing, social distancing, and wearing their masks. As the cold weather arrives and we spend more time indoors, those three things remain critical."

Director Mabb said that his staff has experienced increasing pushback from some residents in the community who resist being isolated or quarantined after having tested positive. "It's unfortunate, but we have individuals in the community who appear to not take this disease seriously," he said.

Under a previously issued governor's executive order, for those who believe it is unnecessary to quarantine when having tested positive, it is indeed necessary that you do so. Failure to comply with this order can result in legal action requiring monitored isolation.

"We haven't done that so far because people have been self-compliant, but we may find ourselves in this position with those who don't want to cooperate and not work with the Department of Health," Director Mabb said.

## **COUNTY STATE OF EMERGENCY EXTENDED**

On Wednesday, Chairman Murell announced that an extension of the county's state of emergency – caused by COVID-19 -- would take effect at 12 p.m. today, Thursday, October 15, and remain in effect for a period of 30 days until November 13, 2020, at 12 p.m.

The full text of the declaration is available on the Columbia County website at <https://www.columbiacountyny.com>

## **UPCOMING COUNTY DOH FLU CLINIC SCHEDULE**

The Columbia County Health Department has announced a series of upcoming seasonal flu vaccine drive-thru clinics for all Columbia County residents two years old and up. Pre-registration is required for the date you wish to be vaccinated – failure to register ahead of time will mean you cannot be vaccinated on that date. Each individual must complete a registration form, and photo ID is required for each adult.

If you are sick with any symptoms associated with the flu or COVID-19 illness (fever, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, sore throat, chills, new loss of taste or smell, or extreme headache), do not go to the drive-thru clinic. Instead, call your primary care physician or the DOH at 518-828-3358 for further guidance.

Clinic registration can be completed by visiting the DOH website at [www.columbiacountynyhealth.com](http://www.columbiacountynyhealth.com) and clicking on the link for the specific clinic you wish to attend. Those with internet access are advised to call the registration line at 518-828-335d ext. 1310. Leave your name and phone number and a DOH staff member will contact you to complete your registration.

The DOH accepts the following insurance plans: Blue Shield of North East New York, CDPHP, Fidelis, Medicare Part B, MVP, Medicaid, and United Health Care. Other senior plans may be billed, including some Blue Cross Blue Shield plans. If you are uninsured or underinsured, you may be eligible for a lower fee or no fee for the flu vaccine. All others are expected to pay a fee of \$42 for the flu vaccine, with the exact cash amount or checks accepted. Debit or credit cards are not accepted.

The drive-thru clinic schedule is as follows:

- Saturday, October 17, 9-11 a.m., Ichabod Crane Central School, Valatie,
- Thursday, October 22, 10 a.m. – 12 noon, New Lebanon Town Hall, New Lebanon.

The flu vaccine will also be offered by appointment only at the regularly scheduled immunization clinic every Tuesday from 1-3:30 p.m. at the county DOH building located at 325 Columbia Street, Hudson. An evening immunization clinic is also available on the third Tuesday of each month from 4-6 p.m. All clinics are by appointment only.

The flu vaccine is the best protection we have from the flu and its complication, and has become even more critical in the time of COVID-19. Talk to your doctor before getting the flu shot if you have ever had a serious allergic reaction to eggs or a previous flu shot, or have a history of Guillain-Barre Syndrome.

## **UPCOMING COVID-19 MOBILE TESTING CLINICS**

Three COVID-19 testing clinics have been scheduled for October at the John L. Edwards Primary School in Hudson, said Columbia County Department of Health Director Jack Mabb on Thursday.

The clinics are limited to 100 tests. Pre-registration is not required. A form of photo identification will be necessary, and masks are required for entry. These will be nasopharyngeal swabs which are useful in detecting

the virus in actively sick people. The kits used at these clinics are part of those purchased with the help of private donations to Columbia County.

Symptoms most typical of COVID-19 include fever, cough, trouble breathing, loss of taste or smell, as well as any symptoms consistent with CDC guidelines.

The clinics will be held the following dates:

- Tuesday, October 20, 2020, from 9-11 a.m.
- Tuesday, October 27, 2020, from 9-11 a.m.

#### *DONATION INFORMATION*

**Masks:** Those wishing to donate cloth masks to the county stockpile may contact the county Emergency Management office at 518-828-1212 or [cceoc@columbiacountysheriff.us](mailto:cceoc@columbiacountysheriff.us). Or Supervisor Rob Lagonia at [rlagonia@austerlitzny.com](mailto:rlagonia@austerlitzny.com)

**Monetary:** Monetary donations intended for the purchase of coronavirus testing kits and much-needed equipment for emergency responders, medical personnel, and others on the front lines of the coronavirus fight are advised to send a check in care of Columbia County, with coronavirus noted in the memo field. The check can be sent to the Columbia County Controller's Office, 401 State Street, Hudson, NY 12534. All money received is being placed in a dedicated account.

**PPE:** Those wishing to make donations of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), such as N95 masks, face shields, and gowns, are advised to contact the Emergency Management Office at 518-828-1212. If no one answers, leave a message and someone will return the call.

**Food:** Donations should be directed to the county Office for the Aging (518-828-4258) and local food pantries.

#### *DISCLAIMER*

It is the county's intention to issue accurate information regarding the coronavirus situation under conditions that can change by the minute. For the most up-to-date, accurate information, visit the County Department of Health's website at <https://www.columbiacountynyhealth.com/home/coronavirus-covid-19> or their Facebook page @: <https://www.facebook.com/Columbia-County-Department-of-Health-469399129790791/>. The state's coronavirus website, with up-to-the-minute information, can be located at <https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/home>.