



**Kathleen Cuddy, MPH
Public Health Director
Cayuga County Health Department
8 Dill St.
Auburn, NY 13021**



For Immediate Release: Saturday, November 21, 2020

Statements from Community Members

As we move forward with holidays in our near future, we want to remind our county residents that each one of us is part of a community where we live, work, play and gather. We may be part of a work community, our children are part of a school community, a sport team or club, perhaps part of a church congregation, book club, civic group or other associations.

The roles in our respective communities may vary, but what remains consistently within our control is how we behave in our participation. A role we can all choose to be part of is that of a good role model to our children, family and neighbors. It is vital we all wear face coverings when in public both indoors and outdoors, that we do not go to work, school or in public when sick, that we wash our hand frequently and thoroughly, that we continue to maintain social distance among people we do not live in the same household with and keep our circles small.

Our collective goal is to keep people healthy. We want people to be able to access the healthcare needed if they are not well. This is the time for us to remain vigilant in our efforts and wisely choose our actions for our personal and community health benefit.

As public health director, I want to thank all of our community members who work hard every day to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Your efforts and actions are appreciated. It is uplifting for staff at our county Public Health Department to know and see the community supporting the efforts to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 and we shall continue to work in service for all of you to improve our public health.

Kathleen D. Cuddy
Public Health Director, Cayuga County



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Cayuga County's local businesses need our support, and they need to be OPEN. Protecting public health and keeping businesses open do not need to be mutually exclusive goals. In fact, preventing the spread of COVID in our community is critical to avoiding more shutdowns of businesses and schools. In this regard, the US Chamber of Commerce is encouraging businesses and individuals across the country to follow the science. Wear a mask, wash your hands, keep your distance. We can all also shop local safely by following posted guidances when we are in a store or restaurant and/or taking advantage of online ordering, delivery, and curbside pickup where available. Employers can also protect employees and help reduce community spread by adjusting work spaces and flows to limit close contacts when possible, treating any symptom an employee has seriously, and encouraging employees to avoid high risk situations. I truly believe our economy can survive and recover, if we all do our part.

Tracy Verrier
Executive Director





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Let's give thanks a little differently this year

We usually look forward to seeing family that we haven't seen at Thanksgiving. This time it should be different. We don't want any uninvited guests: COVID.

We sacrificed so much in the spring this year locking down. It worked!

We learned about the benefits of mask wearing. It was something you could do to help prevent the spread of the virus to your family, friends and coworkers.

We realized that physical distancing reduced the chance of spreading the virus. Many people have been working from home. This reduced the contact at workplaces and between households, reducing the spread of COVID.

While some who get the virus have a mild illness, others get very sick and need hospitalization. Those hospitalizations can be lengthy. That means hospital beds fill up, leaving less room for people who might need the hospital for other reasons such as cardiac care, surgery or childbirth. Every COVID infection carries the chance for hospitalization, and more people hospitalized means fewer beds available to others who might need them. Hospitals aren't just for COVID after all.

This year our Thanksgiving should be different.

We will celebrate with those in our household, but we won't be meeting with family from far away. There is always a chance someone could bring an uninvited guest with them or maybe carry an uninvited guest (COVID) back to their home.

We are thankful for our families. We'll touch base with them by video this year and try to keep them a little safer. We're going to try to do our part and get through this year so maybe next year will be a little different and possibly a little better.

Let's do things a little differently this year.

John Cosachov, DO
President, Cayuga County Board of Health



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As I wish the best to all students and families at this time of Thanksgiving, I ask that everyone consider how impactful their decisions are when it comes to gathering with people during the holiday. The decisions each one of us makes can have ripple effects on the entire community. The health and safety of all students and staff at schools – and the continuity of education that we are all working so hard to provide — depends on everyone’s vigilance and patience to see this public health challenge through to its end.

Our school district’s recent closing after the Halloween season warrants a reminder for all of us. It is critical for all to continue to adhere to the most important COVID safety protocols at all times, whether at school or outside of school. Let’s use this holiday season to set a positive example of following COVID safety protocols. Let us not relent, but rather, let’s reinforce.

Shaun O’Connor | Superintendent of Schools
SOConnor@weedsport.org | Phone: 315.834.6637
www.weedsport.org

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All of us look forward to the Holiday Season, getting together with Family & Friends sharing old memories and creating new ones. This year will be different for each of us. Coming from a very large family, the Holidays were always special. This year will also be special in that it is of a smaller scale with most families downsizing our parties and family gatherings. As citizens of Auburn and our community we make decisions daily that make History’s Hometown a great place to live for people of all ages.

Residents of our city are involved in making personal decisions daily and during the holiday season on how to celebrate. Personal decisions may seem insignificant in their impact to what happens in our community, however individual choices made today and over the next few weeks make a difference. Choosing to put the health of your family and friends first in your decision making, translates to the protecting health of our community. These choices are the greatest gifts you can give this year. Wearing your face covers, avoiding gathering with people outside your home, washing your hands are all the simple choices we can make to keep our community healthy. This helps our City and community keep our businesses open, our children in school and our friends and neighbors healthy.

Michael Quill
Mayor, City of Auburn



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This is a time for being thankful for what we have and holding our loved ones close. But, as this holiday season emerges, the pandemic has brought forth a challenge unlike most of us have ever seen. We've been through an unprecedented and arduous nine months and desperately seek comfort in gathering and celebrating with our families and friends to embrace what's familiar and alleviate the stress and anxiety we've all felt. But we find ourselves conflicted. The continued advance of COVID puts our community at risk and each of us susceptible to contracting and spreading the virus. I'd love to tell you that we should ignore the pragmatic guidance from the State and healthcare community and simply carry forth this holiday season as you normally would.

As your county leader, that is irresponsible for me to suggest.

Locally, it is known that the current spike in positive COVID cases are born out of small gatherings and even what is referred to as "living room spread." We can limit mass gatherings, hold virtual events and virtual meetings, but how do we address the familial, small gathering spread? It has come down to personal choice, personal discipline, and personal sacrifice.

I will be missing out on my mother's Thanksgiving mashed potatoes and gravy (no, I cannot recreate it for myself). I will miss out on throwing hot rolls across the table and making fun of my brothers because I was the only one in my family who actually played baseball. I will miss seeing my nieces and nephews, and their joy in the start of the holiday season. However, in this season of gratitude, I am thankful for their health. I am thankful for the creative ways we will communicate in the coming weeks. I am thankful that we can plan to convene in the future and recreate some of our missed holiday fun.

My wish for this holiday season is for our hospital to worry less about capacity, for our children to get as much out of their education as possible, for our essential employees to get a break and for our local economy to recover. In whatever way you choose to celebrate this Thanksgiving, please be safe and healthy. We are all in this together.

Aileen McNabb-Coleman

Chair

Cayuga County Legislature

160 Genesee Street

Auburn, New York 13021

(315) 744-3424

www.cayugacounty.us