

## **Cayuga County COVID-19 Update - Press Conference March 31, 2020**

Thank you for coming. My name is Aileen McNabb-Coleman. I am the Chair of the Cayuga County Legislature and acting administrator. Today I stand here with our Cayuga County Public Health Director Kathleen Cuddy and our Director of the Cayuga County Office of Emergency Management Amy Russett. Together we have been working around the clock and have been vigilant in our local fight against COVID-19. We, collectively, have been advocating for supplies including Personal Protective Equipment and testing supplies with the Governor's office daily, as well as to our state and federal officials.

We wanted to update you today on where we are to date on our efforts to stop the spread.

I want to introduce Kathleen to speak first.

We have planned, prepared and continue to be proactive as we have seen COVID-19 unfold around our state. We are watching the rolling impact across the state and nation. We are living with this illness in our community.

What the community can do is help. Be a steward of public health. In light of the information shared today, we cannot stress enough that social distancing, reducing density, and ultimately staying home, are the only way to combat the spread of COVID-19. We need to flatten the curve, the intensity and duration of COVID-19. This is a marathon and not a time to become complacent. We need to adapt to change and change our behaviors moving forward.

While educating yourself on COVID-19 and remaining informed, please take stock of the people in your lives and the environment around you. Get outside and make plans to accomplish projects daily. Check up on your loves ones and neighbors, especially aging adults and those living alone. Help brighten one another's day. Be sensible when at the stores, choose one person to go and offer to get extra supplies for neighbors and family. If you feel sick, please stay home and contact your doctor.

We have a County resource line. While the county buildings are closed to the public, we continue working very hard to provide service delivery. For instance, if people are in need of meals, such as children and families or isolated seniors, among other human service or department needs, call 315-253-1355 and callers will be directed to the appropriate department for assistance. Please call us M-F, 9-5 and on the weekends, 9-12.

I want to end by saying Thank YOU to our community for your commitment to the health of all of us. Thank you to ALL of our essential workers. Please find a way to thank them, especially the next time you are in a grocery store or in a restaurant. I'm in awe of our nurses, doctors, fire, police, corrections officers, and 911 dispatchers to name a few. Thank you for your tireless commitment. I'm also proud of our local businesses around the county. From the top to the bottom of this county, they have taken steps to reduce exposure. Through workforce reduction and making changes to many internal mechanisms, they are sacrificing to keep our community safe and limit the spread. Please continue to support local businesses wherever possible now and after this crisis.

Thank you to ALL of the departments in county government, the City of Auburn, and all of the towns and villages who continue to work so very hard for all of us. Please visit our county website for updates and alerts at [www.cayugacounty.us](http://www.cayugacounty.us).

Thank you for coming and please be safe.



**Kathleen Cuddy, MPH  
Public Health Director  
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8 Dill St.  
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**Cayuga County COVID-19  
Press Conference March 31, 2020 at 1pm  
Numbers updated at 4:15pm**

**New Cases**

Zero new cases today.

**Confirmed Cases – total year to date**

There have been four total confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Cayuga County.

**Breakdown of cases –**

The first confirmed case identified on Wednesday March 18, 2020

- Not a Cayuga County resident. A man in his 50's.
- This case is counting towards our total year to date numbers, because the individual did not have a place to go and was required to remain in mandatory isolation until they were able to be discharged.
  - New York State is not reflecting this as a case for Cayuga County because he was not a permanent resident of our county.
- The confirmed case recovered and both he and the contact have been discharged from our monitoring.

The second confirmed case was identified on Sunday, March 22, 2020.

- This individual was a Cayuga County female resident in her 20's living outside the City of Auburn.
- Two known contacts were notified and were placed in mandatory quarantine.
  - The two individuals are in quarantine until criteria are met for discharge.
- The confirmed individual recovered and was discharged from isolation.

The third confirmed case was identified on Sunday, March 22, 2020.

- This individual was a Cayuga County female resident in her 30's living outside of the City of Auburn.
- Three known contacts were notified and were placed in mandatory quarantine as well.
  - Two have been discharged from quarantine. One remains in quarantine until criteria are met for discharge.
- The confirmed individual has recovered and was discharged from isolation.



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The fourth confirmed case was identified on Friday, March 27, 2020.

- This individual was a Cayuga County male resident in his 30's living outside of the City of Auburn.
- Ten known contacts were notified and placed into mandatory quarantine. They will remain in quarantine. They will remain in quarantine until criteria are met for discharge.

The Cayuga County Health Department will receive results on any Cayuga County resident who was tested for COVID-19 even if:

- we did not perform the testing (testing was performed by a healthcare provider or Auburn Community Hospital)
- they were tested out of County.

New York State uses an electronic laboratory confirmation system that notifies local health departments of testing performed on their residents.

Just to remind the public, we are getting the results from people being tested at different sites and out of county. The numbers of people tested in our community reflect that.

#### **Former inmate of Auburn Correctional Facility –**

- The inmate was transferred from Auburn Correctional Facility to another site on Tuesday, March 17, 2020.
- The Health Department was notified Sunday, March 22, 2020 of the laboratory confirmed result.
- Our contact tracing investigation led us to identify there were 17 staff who are Cayuga County residents that were in direct contact with inmate.
- All identified staff were placed under mandatory quarantine.
- All are expected to be able to return to work tomorrow.

#### **Cayuga County Jail –**

- An employee, who is not a Cayuga County resident tested positive for COVID-19.
- The Health Department was notified of this on Sunday, March 29, 2020.
- As part of our contact tracing investigation it was determined that two staff have been placed into mandatory quarantine.



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The other Sheriff Department employees have been allowed by our Sheriff the opportunity to work or be at home, out of an abundance of caution for their well-being and that of office mates.

### **Mandatory Quarantine/ Isolation**

44 in mandatory quarantine

1 in mandatory isolation

Individuals that are confirmed COVID cases are placed into Mandatory Isolation. Contacts of confirmed cases are placed into Mandatory Quarantine. These are written legal orders issued by the Public Health Director. The purpose of these orders is to reinforce the importance of compliance and restricts their movement.

Health Department staff are in contact with these individuals daily. Phone calls and an unannounced in-person visits are used for individuals under a mandatory order to verify compliance with staying home.

### **Hospitalized patients**

Of the one case currently in isolation, zero are hospitalized.

### **Deaths**

There have been no deaths related to COVID-19 in our county.

### **COVID-19 Testing in Cayuga County**

New York State Department of Health is not allowing people who do not have symptoms to be tested.

The Cayuga County Health Department is performing testing and has been for over two weeks. As of today, our Health Department has directly performed 104 tests in total.

We are not deciding who should be tested, healthcare providers are making that determination. Health Department staff are performing the test.

Individuals who are experiencing symptoms contact their healthcare providers first. The healthcare providers are assessing their patients for the appropriateness of COVID testing. Healthcare providers notify the Health Department when a test is needed and we will schedule an appointment.



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As of today, we are awaiting the results of 45 tests that were performed on Cayuga County residents by the Cayuga County Health Department, physicians, healthcare facilities and licensed clinical laboratories.

Number of test results received since testing began earlier in March – **251** as of this morning.

- This information includes all testing of Cayuga County residents by physicians, healthcare facilities and licensed clinical laboratories.

### **Supplies –**

Our testing supplies and personal protective equipment (PPE) are very limited in our County.

We are working with our local Emergency Management Office to make official requests to New York State. In addition, we immediately began making request for supplies including PPE and viral testing swabs to through various vendors. We continue to make these requests to County EMO, NYS and our vendors on a daily basis.

Included in our requests were hand sanitizer, PPE and viral testing swabs. To date, we have received hand sanitizer and some PPE. We have not received any swabs from New York State.

The only swabs we have received have been given to us by Auburn Community Hospital. This is how we have been able to perform testing in Cayuga County.

The Cayuga County Health Department remains committed to testing as long as testing is beneficial and necessary and appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) that keeps our staff and patients safe is available.

Each county in New York State is responding to and offering testing in different ways. Onondaga and Tompkins counties, **have opened self-referred testing for people with symptoms**. Some Cayuga County residents have chosen to get tested at these sites.

Other local health departments like Cortland County, are not performing testing at all, relying on the healthcare providers in their county to do this.

Monroe County is only testing those seriously ill, healthcare workers and first responders.



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With each confirmed COVID-19 case, we will be following New York State Department of Health guidance and will not be releasing de-identifying information such as town of residence for those who test positive for COVID-19.

Our Health Department staff live in our County. They are dedicated public health professionals, working to protect the health of individuals we serve and protect the privacy rights of patients.

Our messaging is the same whether we have three cases or three hundred. COVID-19 is in Cayuga County.

It is likely we have more cases than our numbers reflect. This is for a variety of reasons including, people have mild symptoms and are recovering without seeking healthcare, people whose healthcare providers did not order testing and ordered appropriate care for their symptoms to be managed at home, and people can be asymptomatic (not showing symptoms) but could be transmitting the virus.

It is essential that our community continue to practice social distancing. We appreciate everyone's efforts to keep their distance from family and friends. Please remember to be good neighbors, social distancing, staying home when sick and washing your hands frequently are our only forms of prevention against COVID-19.

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## **CAYUGA COUNTY EMERGENCY SERVICES**

**Emergency Management – Fire / Rescue – EMS – Special Operations**

160 Genesee Street, Auburn NY 13021

Phone: (315)-255-1161 Fax: (315)-253-1551

Email: [ccoes@cayugacounty.us](mailto:ccoes@cayugacounty.us)



**Amy Russett – Director of Emergency Services**  
**Harry Sherman – Deputy Director of Emergency Services**  
**Kim Taggerty – Administrative Officer of Emergency Services**

Good Afternoon,

I would like to start off by thanking everyone who made a donation of personal protective equipment to the Emergency Management office. Your generosity has been greatly appreciated. All donated items have been pushed back out to our essential services groups and first responders.

I would also like to recognize all of the healthcare professionals, first responders, law enforcement agencies and human service professionals for all of their dedication and countless hours to help support our communities in these trying times.

We have been working to secure orders of personal protective equipment through commercial suppliers every day. As of today, we have received 1 shipment of medical gloves that have been distributed. We have multiple orders pending due to the increase in demand.

As of today, we have received two shipments of personal protective equipment from NYS. The first shipment was received on 3/17/2020 and consisted of masks and gloves. This shipment was 52% of the total that was ordered. The second shipment was received on 3/28/2020 and consisted of masks, gowns and gloves. This shipment was 32% of the total that was ordered.

Moving forward NYS will be shipping us our allotted quantities of personal protective equipment which is approximately 32% of the weekly usage rates for the following entities: Auburn Community Hospital, Cayuga County Health Department, all Fire/EMS/and Law Enforcement first responders, medical offices, nursing homes and assisted living facilities.

To support Auburn Community Hospital with their surge planning, we have requested additional items as follows: 10 ventilators, 10 powered air purifying respirators, 15 hospital beds and all associated personal protective equipment.

To support the Cayuga County Health Department we have ordered the following items: 500 Swab testing kits, 20 No touch thermometers, 50 rapid flu tests, 50 rapid strep tests, face shields, procedural masks and other associated personal protective equipment.

We have multiple pending requests entered through NYResponds that we are monitoring daily for the availability and delivery of all supplies.

Thank you,

Amy Russett  
Director, Cayuga County Emergency Management