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Cayuga County Health Department statement on public disclosure

Cayuga County Health Department is bound to confidentiality rules which specify that only the minimum necessary information about a patient be revealed to accomplish the necessary Public Health purpose. As COVID-19 initially infiltrated our community, the number of diagnosed and quarantined cases could not provide for patient anonymity if locale were shared. Cayuga County Health Department has been providing daily updates to keep our community informed about the spread of COVID-19. At times people have used the COVID-19 information shared by the Health Department as a justification to inappropriately discriminate against a person or place. For these reasons, we have deliberately waited to share data on locations in order to have a greater number of values.

When it comes to COVID-19 it is important to remember there are diagnosed cases of disease in our county. There are numerous residents who have been contacts of confirmed cases, both in Cayuga County and other communities, with whom the Health Department is in communication as part of contact tracing. Our health care providers have shared there are likely undiagnosed cases of COVID-19 in our county. People can be transmitting the virus and not realize it. The purpose of knowing this is so you can focus on actions you and your family can take to continue social distancing, reduce trips to only essential requirements, wear a face covering in public and clean your hands frequently and thoroughly.

The Cayuga County Health Department will continue to do our role in prevention, limiting ongoing exposures, providing surveillance, specimen collection, case management for people in isolation, quarantine and awaiting test results, education, information sharing and collaboration with our partners. We are asking all of you to use information provided by our Health Department for the purpose intended, an awareness that the virus is present throughout our county.