

Dear Quogue Residents,

Fortunately, the positivity rate for testing on Long Island continues to be right around 1%, but we know from a release a couple of weeks ago concerning the Governor's cluster (now micro-cluster) action initiative what things will look like in the event that we experience a cluster. There are three areas of enhanced regulation (Red—the cluster itself, Orange—the warning zone, and Yellow—the precautionary zone). In the Red area, houses of worship can have only 25% capacity (not exceeding 10 people), mass gatherings are prohibited, only “essential businesses” (remember that concept?) can operate, the only restaurant dining that exists is takeout, and schools are closed for in-person learning. Orange and Yellow areas have restrictions that are somewhat less extensive. For a full description go to <https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-cuomo-announces-new-cluster-action-initiative>. Let's not become a cluster or even be near one.

On Sunday, Governor Cuomo announced the release by the New York Department of Health of a draft program to serve as an initial framework for ensuring the safe and effective distribution of a Covid-19 vaccine. The draft prioritizes certain populations to receive the vaccine first. Not surprisingly, essential healthcare workers in patient care roles are among those with the highest priority. See <https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-cuomo-announces-draft-new-york-state-covid-19-vaccination-administration-program> for the full draft and to see where you might stand on the priority list. That was not it for vaccine announcements on Sunday, however. The National Governors Association, which Governor Cuomo chairs, sent a letter to the Trump Administration with a list of 30 questions (not counting embedded sub-questions) covering funding issues, allocation and supply chain issues, and communication and information requirements. These are mostly essay questions. I would not expect answers right away. See the following for the full list: <https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/national-governors-association-submits-list-questions-trump-administration-effective>.

States on New York's list that require a 14-day quarantine for travelers and returning New Yorkers grew again, this time by two (Arizona and Maryland). There are 40 jurisdictions on the list now. Connecticut, New Jersey and Pennsylvania also would be, the Governor said, but for the fact that adding them is not “practically viable.” Nevertheless, non-essential travel to those states should be avoided, according to him. The full list is here: <https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/covid-19-travel-advisory>.

Movie theaters outside of New York City can open on Friday, October 23. There are restrictions, of course—25% of capacity with a 50-person max, masks except when seated, drinking or eating (which is pretty much all that people do in a theater), assigned seating, enhanced air filtration, ventilation and purification. Don't cancel the Netflix subscription yet.

Ski resorts can open “with 50 percent indoor capacity” starting on November 6. I am not sure what that means exactly or the implications for someone who wants to take a bathroom or lunch break, but there is probably time to refine that before the snow is ready.

Halloween guidance arrived from the Governor's office earlier this morning: <https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/seasonal-celebrations>. Traditional trick-or-treating is discouraged but not prohibited. Quogue will allow it, but people should follow the guidelines. Kids over age two must wear a cloth or surgical mask but not in combination with a Halloween-type mask. Stick with members of your own household only, but if you do run into others maintain a social distance. Homeowners should bag their commercially-wrapped treats and leave them outside in a row where they can be picked up individually, not in a bowl. Families should bring hand sanitizer and use it and wash hands immediately when arriving home. The usual Fire Department-sponsored parade for kids will not be held this year, unfortunately, because of the mass gathering restrictions limiting them to 50 people. The Governor increased the fine for violating these restrictions to \$15,000, by the way.

Early voting starts on Saturday, October 24 and continues through November 1. The two sites closest to Quogue are:

Stony Brook University Southampton Campus

70 Tuckahoe Road
Southampton NY 11968

Riverhead Senior Center

60 Shade Tree Lane
Aquebogue NY 11931

Hours of operation vary and so check the Suffolk County Board of Elections website (<https://www.suffolkcountyny.gov/Departments/BOE/Early-Voting-Sites-11-3-2020>).

On election day, the Quogue Fire House will be the polling place, as usual—6:00 am to 9:00 pm.

Don't do what a Water Mill man allegedly did, according to Suffolk County DA, Tim Sini—apply for an absentee ballot (twice) in the name of your recently-deceased mother. That could get you 1-1/3 to 4 years for voter fraud.

Peter Sartorius
Mayor