

Dear Quogue Residents,

**Coronavirus.** Covid-19 cases continue to rise on Suffolk County. The testing positivity rate has been over 7% recently and was 9.1% on December 27, and both hospitalizations and the ICU populations are rising as well. In a conference call last week, it was apparent that the concern of our east end hospitals is increasing. At their request the East End Supervisors and Mayors Association joined with the east end hospitals to issue a press release asking residents of the north and south forks to ask residents to stay home and stay safe this year. It said in part:

“Households are encouraged to stay together, not invite additional non-immediate family members or friends over for meals or drinks during the holiday, and not to attend parties, especially indoors ....”

So please, cancel the New Year gathering with non-household members even if the number of people present will not exceed 10 and dial up a Zoom call with your friends, if you must. Remember that it is not just the people in the room who are put at risk. It is all the others with whom they may come into contact afterward. Furthermore, we owe it to our health care workers to do our part. It is not that burdensome. We can do it.

By the way, the cumulative reported cases in Quogue have ticked up to 31 (from 27 recently) as of December 27.

It is worth reminding everyone what you must do if you test positive for Covid-19 or think you contracted it. According to the CDC website, you must isolate and can be around others only when 10 days have expired since the onset of symptoms (or a positive test if you never develop symptoms), you have not had a fever for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications **and** other symptoms of Covid-19 are improving. Note that these recommendations do not apply to people with severe Covid-19 or with severely weakened immune systems. They should consult with a healthcare provider. See <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/disposition-in-home-patients.html#>.

As to the quarantine obligation after being in close contact with a person having Covid-19 or after traveling, on December 26 the New York Department of Health issued updated guidance stating that the quarantine can end after 10 days (rather than the former 14 days) without a testing requirement if no symptoms have been experienced during the quarantine period. Individuals must continue to monitor for symptoms through day 14. See for further reference <https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2020/12/covid19-health-advisory-updated-quarantine-guidance-12.26.20.pdf>.

**Vaccines.** There has been some confusion about the priority of persons to receive the newly-released coronavirus vaccines. The CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices' recommendations as revised on December 20 have the following priorities for the early wave:

- 1a. Healthcare workers who have exposure to patients or infectious materials and long-term care facility residents
- 1b. Persons 75 and older and other (non-healthcare) frontline essential workers--first responders (e.g., fire and police), corrections officers, food and agriculture workers, U.S. Postal Service workers, manufacturing workers, grocery store workers, public transit workers, and those who work in the education sector (teachers and support staff members) as well as child care workers
- 1c. Persons ages 64-74, persons ages 16-64 with high risk medical conditions and other essential workers

The guidance from the NY Department of Health has been a little different, but in guidance released yesterday for Facilities Receiving Covid-19 Vaccine, Weeks 1-4, Phase 1A Only, became pretty much aligned with the CDC:

Phase 1A: Healthcare personnel (i.e. paid and unpaid personnel working in a healthcare setting), first responders in medical roles such as emergency medical services providers, Medical Examiners and Coroners, funeral workers, ambulatory care providers and persons living in and working in long-term care facilities and long-term, congregate settings overseen by certain State agencies

Phase 1B: Essential frontline workers and those 75 years of age and older

Phase 1C: Other essential workers, those 16 years of age and older with high-risk medical conditions and people 65 years of age and older.

Yesterday's guidance can be found at <https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/covid-19-vaccine-information-providers>. I will say that I found it to be a little complicated. There are a lot of rules and priorities, and the Department of Health is involved at many points. We have all heard that the vaccine actually getting into arms is going more slowly than hoped and we are only at Phase 1A. I hope that the rules do not interfere.

**The Beach.** The two storms that have hit us recently were definitely pretty nasty. The first one removed a lot of sand from our beach and dunes. The second one, on December 24-25, with a south wind actually added some sand back, and our stairs at the Village Beach, having been shored up after the first storm by Paddy McChesney, are still useable (but do not use the vehicle overpass—you'll see why). Looks like the next test may be coming around New Year's Day.

**The Post Office.** The Quogue Post Office continues to be very busy, handling upwards of 900 packages on a recent day when I spoke to Tom, the postmaster. We in the Village Office use the Post Office as much as anyone and see how hard the employees their work. If there is a yellow card in your box when you pick up your mail and there is a line, consider coming back at another time. The Post Office is not always busy. I know because I use it myself. If you choose to wait, relax. Take a "chill pill," as I heard one resident say, and be courteous to the people who work there.

Best wishes for a Happy New Year, at home.

Peter Sartorius  
Mayor