



COUNTY OF SULLIVAN
DIVISION OF HEALTH & FAMILY SERVICES
Public Health Services
GLADYS OLMSTED BUILDING
50 COMMUNITY LANE
LIBERTY, NY 12754

August 2, 2021

Dear Sullivan County School Superintendents and Principals:

With COVID-19 cases climbing towards the three-digit mark – after having been in the single digits just a month ago – Sullivan County Public Health Services is urging people to take proper precautions, including getting vaccinated.

In just a week's time, our active cases have tripled, from 24 on July 26 to 72 on August 2. This indicates transmission is becoming widespread again. Over the past weekend, four people were hospitalized with coronavirus, with one serious enough to be admitted to an intensive care unit. While no new deaths have been recorded for some time, over 100 people are currently in quarantine. By the end of today we saw a jump of at least 30 new infections over the weekend.

As of today, 50.7% of the population has at least one dose
61.6% of the 18+ population has at least one vaccine dose
(NYS COVID-19 Vaccine Tracker) <https://covid19vaccine.health.ny.gov/covid-19-vaccine-tracker>

With the much more contagious Delta variant widespread nationally, which is also currently the predominant strain of COVID-19 circulating in New York State, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) placed Sullivan County in its 'substantial' transmission zone. I am once again strongly encouraging everyone – vaccinated or unvaccinated – to wear masks indoors in situations where you cannot be at least six feet away from another person, and even outdoors when social distance cannot be maintained and you are in a large group for extended periods of time.

CDC recommends universal indoor masking for all teachers, staff, students, and visitors to K-12 schools, regardless of vaccination status. Children should return to full-time in-person learning in the fall with layered prevention strategies in place. Having dealt with COVID-19 over the past 16 months together, we must continue to follow the evolving science and research. In the absence of updated guidance from the NYS Department of Health, we will continue to follow the most current CDC recommendations, and I am in support of this recommendation for K-12 schools.

We have a chance to avoid returning to the rough days of the COVID-19 pandemic, but it's going to take a County-wide effort of everyone doing their part. Encouraging vaccination among your staff, students, parents and teachers who are not yet vaccinated will significantly improve their chances of not becoming seriously ill – and it will greatly help lessen the spread of the virus, which threatens to again disrupt our lives if not kept under control.

For children ages 12-17 returning to school in just 5 weeks, now is the time to get them vaccinated in order to have full protective immunity before school starts. Public Health offers Pfizer doses (ages 12 and older) every Wednesday from 2-6 p.m. at its offices at 50 Community Lane in Liberty. Walk in or register at sullivan.ny.us/Departments/PublicHealth/COVIDvaccines/clinics.

Other locations where you can get vaccinated can be found at www.vaccines.gov, by texting your zip code to 438829, or by calling 1-800-232-0233.

Individuals who have questions about COVID-19 testing should call the New York State COVID-19 Hotline at 1-888-364-3065.

Please see the attached fact sheet on the Delta variants and Q&A provided by the CDC and share with your school communities.

Feel free to reach out to me with questions.

Sincerely,

Nancy McGraw

Nancy McGraw, MPH, MBA, LCSW
Public Health Director