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91st Assembly District  
Larchmont - Mamaroneck - New Rochelle - Port Chester - Rye Brook and Rye

December 22, 2020

Dear Friends,

Last week brought news on a number of fronts and this e-mail includes information on a variety of topics and available resources.

The arrival of the Covid-19 vaccine begins what will be a long journey to eradicate this virus. A Long Island nurse was the first person in the country to receive the vaccine last week. Each state is adopting protocols for vaccine distribution. As health care workers and nursing homes become the first recipients, more details on the rollout in New York are emerging and are included here. More specifics will be announced by the NYS Department of Health in the days ahead.

I continue to help address Covid-19 issues throughout the Sound Shore, helping spread the public health message of safe behavior, testing and how to access resources. In Port Chester, Senator Shelley Mayer and I continue to work with state, county and local officials to fight for small businesses and work with the village to distribute public health information and lower the infection numbers.

Port Chester is currently the only Covid-19 Orange Zone in Westchester, but we succeeded in having personal care salons, barber shops and gyms reopened based upon statistics showing they could operate safely under limited capacity rules. We are making the same case for Port Chester restaurants.

As of this writing, Congress has just adopted a new Covid-19 stimulus package that will bring additional funding to New Yorkers. As the details become clear, my office is available to help individuals and organizations access funds that flow to our state.

This newsletter includes:

- Vaccination Rollout Begins in NYS
- Covid-19 Resource Links
- Westchester County Covid-19 Infection Map
- Good News for Port Chester Salons and Gyms
- Beware of Covid-19 Vaccine Scams
- NY State of Health Deadline Extended
- Housing Assistance Programs
- Small Business Lease Assistance
- College Scholarships Available
- School and College COVID-19 Dashboard Available Online
- 'No Left Turn' Off Exit 30S/King St from Hutchinson Parkway North
- Protect Our Courts Act Signed Into Law

Better public health practices work—wear a mask, socially distance, wash your hands, get tested and stop the spread. Please contact my office at 914-939-7028 if I can be of assistance.

Have a great holiday season. After a very challenging 2020, may we all treasure our time with family and remember to continue to be careful as we join together with hope for the new year.

Warm regards,

*Steve*



**Vaccination Rollout Begins in NYS**

As is the case around the country, New York is rolling out distribution of the Covid-19 vaccine with the first vaccines going to front-line health care workers, nursing home residents and vulnerable individuals.

The first New Yorkers to receive the vaccine will be high-risk hospital workers (emergency room workers, ICU staff and Pulmonary Department staff), nursing home residents and staff, followed by all long-term and congregate care residents and staff, EMS workers, other health care workers and medical examiners. Staff at every hospital will have access to the first vaccine allocation.

I have asked that the state provide details as soon as possible for how senior citizens and medically vulnerable individuals who do not live in a group setting will get vaccines. At risk individuals living alone need a clear path to how to get vaccinated and the state is putting that plan together. Both the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines require two doses that are administered 21 and 28 days apart respectively. In the days ahead, the details on accessing the vaccine will be updated on the [NYS Department of Health website](#).

To learn more about New York's COVID-19 Vaccination Program, [click here](#).

**Westchester Resources**

To find a testing site near you and to make an appointment, please visit the [NY State Health Department](#) or call the New York State COVID-19 Hotline at 1-888-364-3065.

Testing is free for all New Yorkers at NYS run test sites.

[Find a Test Site Near You](#)

For help with quarantine and isolation, call 866-588-0195

Covid-19 testing information 888-364-3065

Westchester County General COVID-19 Information – United Way 211

County Health Department COVID-19 Information page [HERE](#)

Free flu shots Saturday and Sunday at the County Center. Register [HERE](#).

**Good News for Port Chester Salons and Gyms**

Last week, Governor Cuomo announced the Department of Health will allow personal care businesses and gyms in orange zones to re-open at 25% capacity. This was good news for Port Chester's salons and gyms that had been shut down for approximately three weeks.

The decision came based upon contact tracing data that showed that businesses and gyms can operate safely with protocols in place and at reduced capacity. As information becomes available about where and how Covid-19 spreads, the DOH has made adjustments to try and minimize disruptions while also safeguarding public health.

We are making the same case for restaurants in Port Chester, given improved statistics and the small geographic size of the village.



I visited the mobile Covid-19 testing site in Port Chester, made possible by New York State, Westchester County and Westchester Medical Center. There are numerous ongoing and mobile testing opportunities throughout the county.

**Beware of Covid-19 Vaccine Scams**

The Westchester County Department of Consumer Protection is warning all Westchester residents to be vigilant for Covid-19 vaccine scams as we enter the next phase of the pandemic. Any solicitation, via call, text or in-person, with offers to receive the vaccine should be ignored.

**Tips for Westchester residents to avoid scams:**

- Covid-19 vaccine is expected to be free.
- There are no sign-up lists for vaccine.
- You can't pay to get your vaccine earlier.
- Medicare or Social Security won't be calling you about getting your vaccine (scammers often act like they are calling from government agencies).
- You don't need to give out SSN, credit card or bank info before you are able to get vaccine.
- Turn to trusted sources - such as your local health department or your doctor for questions and guidance.

If you are contacted by someone looking to sell you early access to the vaccine, contact Westchester Consumer Protection at [914-995-2155](#) or at [ConPro@westchestergov.com](mailto:ConPro@westchestergov.com).

**NY State of Health Deadline Extended**

New Yorkers have two more weeks (until December 31) to enroll in a health plan that begins on January 1. As the pandemic continues, it is especially important for New Yorkers to have access to high-quality, affordable health insurance. Please visit [their website](#) or call [1-855-355-5777](#) to enroll.

**Housing Assistance Programs**

Two housing programs are available with fast approaching deadlines. More information is available [HERE](#).

**Eviction Prevention Program**

This program, which is available through the Westchester County Planning Department, can provide up to 75 percent of back rent for up to eight months of rental assistance for landlords who can demonstrate tenants were up to date for March, but have not been able to pay their rent due to COVID. This program can assist owners of buildings with between three and 50 units and would be done by lottery to establish order for assistance. Applications will be reviewed on a first come, first served basis. For more information, please contact Pam Tarlow at (914) 995-1920.

Application in [English](#)      Application in [Spanish](#)

**Foreclosure Prevention Program:**

This program can provide up to several months of mortgage/cooperative arrears for those who can demonstrate Covid-19 caused mortgage payment delays, and that they were up to date on their mortgages as of March 2020.

Assistance is available through four nonprofits agencies:

- The Bridge Fund of Westchester - [\(914\) 949-8146](#)
- Community Housing Innovations - [\(914\) 683-1010](#)
- Human Development Services of Westchester - [\(914\) 939-2878](#)
- Westchester Residential Opportunities - [\(914\) 428-4507](#)

**COVID Rent Relief Extension**

The COVID Rent Relief Program has reopened for application with expanded eligibility criteria in an effort to serve New Yorkers who may have not had the opportunity to initially apply, and to serve those who may have been previously ineligible. I was a co-sponsor of the legislation that established this program.

The application period will remain open through February 1, 2021. [Previous applicants do not need to reapply to be considered](#). HCR will re-evaluate all applications that were denied according to the new criteria and issue revised determination letters to applicants.

Applications for the program and additional information is available here: [www.hcr.ny.gov/HRP](http://www.hcr.ny.gov/HRP)

To qualify for this one-time subsidy, low-income renters impacted by the pandemic must meet all of the following criteria:

- Must be a renter and have a primary residence in New York State;
- Applicants must have lost income during the period of April 1, 2020 to July 31, 2020;
- Before March 7, 2020, household income must have been at or below 80 percent of the Area Median Income, adjusted for household size; and
- Households must be "rent burdened" during the months they are applying for assistance between April 1, 2020 to July 31, 2020.

Throughout the application period, residents who need help or have questions about their application can contact HCR's COVID Rent Relief Program Call Center for assistance at [1-833-499-0318](#) or [covidrentrelief@hcr.ny.gov](mailto:covidrentrelief@hcr.ny.gov). Call Center representatives are available Monday-Friday 8:30 a.m. until 5 p.m.

**New York Forward Small Business Lease Assistance Partnership**

Governor Cuomo announced the launch of the New York Forward Small Business Lease Assistance Partnership. Recognizing the economic impact of COVID-19, this program will provide small businesses and their landlords with informational resources and pro bono assistance to help both parties reach mutually-beneficial lease workout agreements. This service is available to all New York State small businesses and landlords, and participation is voluntary. The [Small Business Lease Assistance Partnership](#) website includes additional information. Those interested are encouraged to complete the partnership's [intake form](#) and can expect to receive an email detailing an estimated timeline for placement with a volunteer attorney.

**College Scholarships Available**

The Jandon Foundation is partnering with the Westchester County Board of Legislators to provide scholarships to 15 high school seniors who will be awarded \$12,000 each over their 4 year college careers. The scholarship program supports and encourages promising young students who can demonstrate a financial need and who possess strong academic records with extracurricular activities and community service to apply. The application deadline for the 2021 Jandon Scholarship is **February 12, 2021**. The application can be found here: [jandonscholars.org/application](http://jandonscholars.org/application)

For more information, visit [www.jandonscholars.org](http://www.jandonscholars.org) or contact Program Coordinator Melanie Montalto at [Jandonscholars@gmail.com](mailto:Jandonscholars@gmail.com)

**School and College COVID-19 Dashboard Available Online**

Governor Cuomo has required that all schools, including private schools and colleges, report COVID-19 cases to the NYS Department of Health on a daily basis.

[School and University Covid-19 Statewide Tracker](#)

**'No Left Turn' Off Exit 30S/King St from Hutchinson Parkway North**



I was very pleased to attend the brook/greenwich exit ramp off the northbound Hutchinson River Parkway on King Street. Following requests from Rye Brook officials, I worked with NYS DOT and Senator Shelley Mayer to get the long-needed change adopted. DOT studied the options, coordinated with Connecticut and approved the change that will ease traffic flow at the exit by requiring traffic going north on King Street to take the next exit after the bridge rather than clogging the Exit 30S ramp. I was joined at the ramp by Mayor Paul Rosenberger, Village Administrator Chris Bradbury, Police Chief Greg Austin and Senator Mayer.

**Protect Our Courts Act Signed Into Law**

The Protect Our Courts Act, legislation that I co-sponsored to ensure New Yorkers can freely access the justice system without fear of being targeted by federal immigration authorities, was signed into law by Governor Cuomo on December 15th (A.2176A/ S.425A). The legislation addresses longstanding concerns that federal immigration enforcement was deterring immigrants from appearing in New York State courts and impeding the fair administration of justice.

Domestic violence victims, crime victims of any kind, remedies or those seeking civil remedies should not fear seeking legal remedies because of concern about entering a courthouse. Justice is not served if an immigrant is afraid to come and testify or seek relief. The new law places in state statute policies already in force in New York through a prior Executive Order by the Governor and a directive by the Chief Judge of the State of New York.



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