



GOVERNOR ANDREW M. CUOMO

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DURING NOVEL CORONAVIRUS BRIEFING, GOVERNOR CUOMO ANNOUNCES NEW MASS GATHERINGS REGULATIONS

Events with 500 or More Individuals in Attendance to Be Cancelled or Postponed

Any Gathering Under 500 Individuals in Attendance Will Be Required to Cut Capacity by 50 Percent

New Limits on Visitations to Nursing Homes - Only Medically Necessary Visits Will Be Allowed To Protect Most Vulnerable

First Public Drive-Through Testing Facility on the East Coast, Located in New Rochelle, Will Start Testing Tomorrow

Confirms 109 Additional Coronavirus Cases in New York State - Bringing Statewide Total to 325; New Cases in 14 Counties

During a novel coronavirus briefing, Governor Andrew M. Cuomo today announced the state will institute limits on mass gatherings, directing events with 500 or more individuals in attendance to be cancelled or postponed. Public health experts agree mass gatherings with people making sustained close contact are a place where the novel coronavirus can easily infect many people quickly and continue its spread. As such, events, gatherings, or places of business with less than 500 individuals in attendance will be required to cut capacity by 50 percent, with exceptions being made for spaces where individuals do not make sustained close contact, such as schools, hospitals, public buildings, mass transit, grocery stores and retail stores. These new regulations will go into effect Friday, March 13th at 5pm, with the exception of Broadway Theaters where the limits will go into effect this evening at 5pm.

In an effort to protect some of the most vulnerable New Yorkers, Governor Cuomo also announced only medically necessary visits will be allowed at nursing homes. This policy will be effective Friday at 5pm. The state is also asking nursing homes to set up skyping and other online communication capacity so families can tele-visit their loved ones. Additionally, the state will require health screenings for all nursing home workers each day when they enter a facility and require them to wear surgical masks to guard against any potential asymptomatic spread.

In order to increase testing capacity, the State is contracting with BioReference Laboratories to run an additional 5,000 tests per day on top of what the state is already doing. These additional 5,000 tests per day will come online next week. This additional testing capacity is on top of that of the 28 private labs the Governor announced are partnering with the state in the coming days and weeks. Additionally, the Governor announced the first public drive-through testing facility on the east coast will start testing people tomorrow in New Rochelle. Testing will be done by appointment only. New Rochelle residents who have been quarantined will be tested first.

Finally, the Governor confirmed 109 additional cases of novel coronavirus, bringing the statewide total to 325 confirmed cases in New York State. Of the 325 total individuals who tested positive for the virus, the geographic breakdown is as follows:

Albany County: 1 (1 new)
Broome County: 1 (1 new)
Delaware County: 1 (1 new)
Dutchess County: 1 (1 new)
Herkimer County: 1 (1 new)
Monroe County: 1 (1 new)
Nassau County: 41 (13 new)
New York City: 95 (43 new)
Orange County: 1 (1 new)
Rockland County: 7 (1 new)
Saratoga County: 3 (1 new)
Suffolk County: 20 (14 new)
Ulster County: 4 (3 new)
Westchester County: 148 (27 new)

"The spread of this coronavirus is not going to stop on its own, and we know that mass gatherings have been hotspots for the virus to infect large numbers of people quickly," **Governor Cuomo said.** "To help contain it, we are instituting limits on large events as well as new measures to protect our most vulnerable populations — including people in nursing homes — and preparing our healthcare system to be able to deal with any future capacity issues. While the context is key and the anxiety is outpacing the facts of this situation, we will continue taking aggressive action to protect public health and prepare for any future spread of this virus."

"Our number one priority is protecting the public health and every action the Governor and the State of New York have taken thus far have been in furtherance of that goal," **State Health Department Commissioner Dr. Howard Zucker said.** "Public health experts have been clear that limiting large public gatherings where there is potential for close contact is a critical way to slow the spread of this virus. This regulation will help keep people healthy and safe."

The Governor also announced that the State is taking measures to create a reserve workforce of health care professionals in the event of a staffing shortage and identify state facilities that can be used as temporary hospitals. The State is asking former doctors, nurses and other health care professionals to reconnect with their former employers and offer to work on an on-call basis in the cases of a staffing shortage. The State is also identifying National Guard medics for reserved staffing and contacting medical schools to identify possible reserve health care professionals. Additionally, the Department of Health is accelerating regulations to get more health care personnel trained so they can work in other areas.

For all schools in communities with the highest rates of positive cases, the state will be taking proactive steps to implement protocols that limit mass contact. Today the Governor announced SUNY Albany will cancel in person classes for the rest of the semester effective tomorrow after a positive case was confirmed today.

Additionally, any business that cannot accommodate rigorous cleaning standards should contact Empire State Development at [\(212\) 803-3100](tel:(212)803-3100) for a close order.

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