

1st Quarter Healthcare

1/5/2021

THE MOHAWK VALLEY REGION HAS THE HIGHEST CORONAVIRUS INFECTION RATE IN NEW YORK, AND ONE OF THE HIGHEST IN THE UNITED STATES. THAT'S ACCORDING TO NEW FIGURES RELEASED BY STATE OFFICIALS YESTERDAY. 10-POINT-4 PERCENT OFF EVERYONE TESTED CAME BACK POSITIVE FOR THE VIRUS. THE EPICENTER OF THAT OUTBREAK IS THE UTICA METROPOLITAN AREA. NATIONAL FIGURES SHOW WE HAD THE FIFTH HIGHEST RATE OF NEW CASES IN THE ENTIRE NATION, WITH 133 INFECTIONS FOR EVERY 100-THOUSAND RESIDENTS.

1/7/2021

ONEIDA COUNTY IS DEALING WITH A MASSIVE SPIKE IN OPIOID OVERDOSES. OFFICIALS HAVE ISSUED AN ALERT AFTER THE OVERDOSE RESPONSE TEAM CONFIRMED FOUR DEATHS OVER A SINGLE FIVE DAY PERIOD. IN THAT SAME TIME SPAN FIRST RESPONDERS WERE CALLED OUT FOR A TOTAL OF 17 OVERDOSES. THE SPIKE IN CASES IS PROBABLY THE RESULT OF A TAINTED OR PARTICULARLY STRONG BATCH OF HEROIN. BUT SOME OF THE INCIDENTS WERE THE RESULT OF COCAINE CUT WITH SOME KIND OF OPIOID.

THE AREA'S BLOOD SUPPLY IS GETTING DANGEROUSLY LOW. DONATIONS HAVE PLUNGED SINCE THE START OF THE COVID-19 OUTBREAK. DESPITE THE MOBILIZATION OF HEALTHCARE ASSETS TO FIGHT THE VIRUS HOSPITALS STILL NEED BLOOD TO DEAL WITH EMERGENCIES. THE RED CROSS IS ASKING HEALTHY DONORS TO MAKE APPOINTMENTS AT THE RED CROSS BLOOD DOT ORG WEBSITE. EXTRA SCREENING AND STERILIZATION PROCEDURES HAVE BEEN PUT IN PLACE TO KEEP BOTH DONORS AND THE BLOOD SUPPLY SAFE.

1/11/2021

ONEIDA COUNTY SET ANOTHER GRIM RECORD YESTERDAY, AS EIGHT PEOPLE LOST THEIR LIVES TO THE CORONAVIRUS. THAT'S THE LARGEST NUMBER OF FATALITIES IN A SINGLE DAY SINCE THE START OF THE CORONAVIRUS EPIDEMIC. IT COMES ON THE SAME DAY THE COUNTY SET A NEW RECORD FOR THE TOTAL NUMBER OF INFECTIONS, WITH 6,249 ACTIVE CASES OF THE VIRUS. NEARLY FORTY PEOPLE HAVE DIED FROM COVID-19 SINCE THE START OF THE YEAR, RAISING THE DEATH TOLL TO A TOTAL OF 266 PEOPLE.

1/13/2020

IF YOU WANT TO GET VACCINATED AGAINST COVID-19 IN ONEIDA COUNTY, YOU'RE OUT OF LUCK. MOHAWK VALLEY HEALTH SYSTEM'S SAYS IT'S USED UP ITS ENTIRE ALLOCATION OF DOSES, FORCING THEM TO CANCEL DOZENS OF ALREADY SCHEDULED VACCINATIONS. THEY'RE NOW WAITING FOR ANOTHER SHIPMENT OF VACCINES. THE SHUTDOWN COMES EVEN AS LOCAL OFFICIALS

PREPARE TO OPEN MULTIPLE VACCINATION SITES NEXT WEEK. THE QUESTION NOW IS IF THERE WILL BE ENOUGH SUPPLY TO MEET THE DEMAND.

1/15/2021

THE STATE'S ALREADY CHAOTIC VACCINATION PROGRAM JUST TOOK ANOTHER TURN FOR THE WORST. DOZENS OF PEOPLE WHO SIGNED UP TO GET SHOTS AT THE AUDALICIOUS BUILDING NEXT TO UTICA'S MEMORIAL AUDITORIUM HAVE BEEN TOLD THEIR APPOINTMENTS WERE CANCELLED. WORKERS HAVE BEEN SETTING UP THE FACILITY FOR THE PAST WEEK, BUT IT OFFICIALLY DOESN'T EXIST. OFFICIALS SAY AN UNAUTHORIZED LINK TO THE WEBSITE FOR SCHEDULING APPOINTMENTS STARTED CIRCULATING EARLIER THIS WEEK.

1/18/2021

ONEIDA COUNTY IS SHUTTING DOWN IT'S VACCINATION PROGRAM. THAT WAS THE STUNNING ANNOUNCEMENT FROM COUNTY EXECUTIVE ANTHONY PICENTE YESTERDAY. THE MOVE COMES AFTER THE STATE CUT THE AREA'S ALLOTMENT OF COVID-19 VACCINATIONS TO JUST FIVE HUNDRED DOSES. LOCAL VACCINATION SITES WILL RUN OUT ON WEDNESDAY, FORCING THE PROGRAM'S SUSPENSION AS OF THURSDAY. UNTIL THEN, RESIDENTS CAN BOOK VACCINATION APPOINTMENTS FOR TUESDAY AND WEDNESDAY THROUGH THE O-C-GOV-DOT-NET WEBSITE.

1/27/2021

THE AREA MAY HAVE FINALLY TURNED THE CORNER IN THE FIGHT AGAINST COVID-19. THE TOTAL NUMBER OF ACTIVE CASES HAS DROPPED DOWN TO 6,872 AFTER SPENDING THE LAST TEN DAYS HOVERING AROUND A PLATEAU OF SEVEN THOUSAND. MORE IMPORTANTLY, FOR TWO DAYS IN A ROW THE NUMBER OF RESIDENTS TESTING POSITIVE FOR THE DISEASE HAS BEEN BELOW ONE HUNDRED. THOSE ARE THE BEST NUMBERS WE'VE SEEN SINCE LATE NOVEMBER, WHEN THE CURRENT SPIKE IN CASES FIRST STARTED TO RAMP UP.

2/1/2021

THE PRICE OF HEALTH INSURANCE IN NEW YORK IS SOARING. THAT'S ACCORDING TO A REPORT FROM THE AGENCY FOR HEALTHCARE RESEARCH AND QUALITY. IT FOUND NEW YORKERS ARE PAYING AROUND ONE THOUSAND DOLLARS MORE THAN THE NATIONAL AVERAGE. IN THE PAST SIX YEARS PREMIUMS HAVE JUMPED 26 PERCENT, ONE OF THE LARGEST INCREASES IN THE ENTIRE NATION. EXACERBATING THE PROBLEM IS THE STATE'S HEALTH INSURANCE TAX, USED TO FUND MEDICAID COVERAGE. LAST YEAR THAT AMOUNTED TO FIFTEEN BILLION DOLLARS.

2/2/2021

IT'S TOO SOON TO SAY FOR SURE, BUT IT LOOKS LIKE THE WORST OF THE CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK MAY BE OVER FOR ONEIDA COUNTY. YESTERDAY HEALTH OFFICIALS REPORTED JUST 61 NEW CASES, AND THE TOTAL NUMBER OF

ACTIVE CASES FELL TO 3,186. THAT'S LESS THAN HALF THE NUMBER OF INFECTIONS JUST TEN DAYS AGO. THE DOWNWARD TREND EXTENDED TO THE NUMBER OF HOSPITALIZATIONS AS WELL, WHICH FELL DOWN TO 124. THAT COMES EVEN AS THE COUNTY'S VACCINATION SITES REMAIN CLOSED DUE TO A LACK OF VACCINE.

2/4/2021

TWO NEW VACCINATION SITES WILL OPEN THIS WEEKEND IN ONEIDA COUNTY. THE STATE IS SPONSORING LOCATIONS AT THE PARKWAY RECREATION CENTER IN UTICA AND MOHAWK VALLEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE CAMPUS IN ROME. BUT THEY WON'T BE OPEN TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC. BOTH PODS ARE LIMITED TO MINORITY, LOW INCOME, AND REFUGEE RESIDENTS OF THE AREA. THE COUNTY SITES AT GRIFFISS INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT AND THE M-V-C-C CAMPUS IN UTICA ARE STILL SHUT DOWN, PENDING THE ARRIVAL OF A NEW VACCINE SHIPMENT.

2/11/2021

AFTER MONTHS OF STONEWALLING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH HAS FINALLY RELEASED THE ACTUAL COUNT OF NURSING HOME PATIENTS WHO DIED FROM COVID-19. LAST NIGHT OFFICIALS COMPLIED WITH A COURT ORDER TO RELEASE ALL OF THE DATA, REVEALING THAT THE ACTUAL NUMBER OF FATALITIES WAS OVER 15-THOUSAND. THAT'S A HUGE INCREASE FROM THE ROUGHLY 9-THOUSAND DEAD IN PREVIOUS TABULATIONS. THE NEW FIGURES INCLUDE NURSING HOME PATIENTS THAT WERE TRANSFERRED TO HOSPITALS AND LATER DIED FROM THE VIRUS.

2/15/2021

THE SECOND WAVE OF THE CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK APPEARS TO HAVE SPUTTERED OUT IN ONEIDA COUNTY. TOTAL ACTIVE CASES ARE DOWN TO JUST UNDER A THOUSAND. MORE IMPORTANTLY, THE NUMBER OF NEW INFECTIONS HAS PLUNGED TO 33. THAT'S A FAR CRY FROM THE HUNDREDS OF NEW CASES THAT WERE BEING REPORTED JUST A MONTH AGO. THE NUMBER OF RESIDENTS TESTING POSITIVE FOR THE DISEASE HAS BEEN BELOW ONE HUNDRED FOR OVER TWO WEEKS. THOSE ARE THE BEST NUMBERS WE'VE SEEN SINCE LATE NOVEMBER, WHEN THE CURRENT SPIKE IN CASES FIRST STARTED TO RAMP UP.

2/25/2021

IT COULD SOON BE A LOT EASIER TO GET A COVID-19 VACCINATION IN ONEIDA COUNTY. OFFICIALS SAY THE COUNTY IS CURRENTLY DISCUSSING AN AGREEMENT WITH A NATIONAL PHARMACY CHAIN TO SOURCE VACCINES FOR ANOTHER DRIVE-THROUGH VACCINATION SITE. COUNTY EXECUTIVE ANTHONY PICENTE WOULDN'T IDENTIFY THE COMPANY, BUT SAID THE NEW POD WOULD BE LOCATED AT THE PUBLIC WORKS FACILITY IN ORISKANY. THE COUNTY IS ALSO REACTIVATING IT'S

EXISTING SITES AFTER RECEIVING OVER TWO THOUSAND DOSES DELAYED BY LAST WEEK'S WINTER WEATHER.

3/2/2021

HUNDREDS OF CHILDREN IN ONEIDA COUNTY ARE SUFFERING FROM LEAD POISONING, AND THE STATE COULD BE POISED TO START PROVIDING EXTRA FUNDS TO HELP SOLVE THE PROBLEM. THE WATER CRISIS IN FLINT, MICHIGAN HAS HELPED BRING NEW ATTENTION TO LEAD CONTAMINATION. BUT YOU DON'T HAVE TO LOOK FAR TO FIND IT HAVING AN IMPACT. THE UTICA ROME AREA HAS ONE OF THE HIGHEST LEAD POISONING RATES IN THE NATION. NOW STATE OFFICIALS ARE TALKING ABOUT MAKING EXTRA MONEY AVAILABLE TO FUND MORE TESTING AND PREVENTION PROGRAMS.

3/3/2021

SENIOR CITIZENS WILL BE ABLE TO GET A COVID-19 VACCINATION AT THEIR LOCAL KINNEY DRUGS STARTING NEXT WEEK. THE PHARMACY CHAIN IS PARTNERING WITH THE NEW YORK ASSOCIATION ON AGING TO OFFER THE SHOTS TO ANYONE 65 OR OLDER. THE PILOT PROGRAM IS BEING ROLLED OUT IN 21 COUNTIES ACROSS UPSTATE NEW YORK, INCLUDING ONEIDA AND HERKIMER. THE ASSOCIATION WILL ASSIST SENIORS IN SCHEDULING AN APPOINTMENT BY TELEPHONE. ONEIDA COUNTY RESIDENTS SHOULD CALL 315-798-5456.

3/15/2021

THE AREA'S BLOOD SUPPLY IS GETTING DANGEROUSLY LOW. DONATIONS HAVE PLUNGED SINCE THE START OF THE COVID-19 OUTBREAK. DESPITE THE MOBILIZATION OF HEALTHCARE ASSETS TO FIGHT THE VIRUS HOSPITALS STILL NEED BLOOD TO DEAL WITH EMERGENCIES. THE RED CROSS IS ASKING HEALTHY DONORS TO MAKE APPOINTMENTS AT THE RED CROSS BLOOD DOT ORG WEBSITE. EXTRA SCREENING AND STERILIZATION PROCEDURES HAVE BEEN PUT IN PLACE TO KEEP BOTH DONORS AND THE BLOOD SUPPLY SAFE.

3/22/2021

GETTING A COVID VACCINE COULD BE AS EASY AS A TRIP TO THE LOCAL PHARMACY. NEW RULES FROM THE STATE HEALTH DEPARTMENT ALLOW DRUGSTORES TO ADMINISTER THE SHOTS TO ANYONE WITH AN UNDERLYING MEDICAL CONDITION. WITH THOUSANDS OF DRUGGISTS SCATTERED ACROSS THE STATE THAT SHOULD MAKE IT CONSIDERABLY EASIER FOR THE MOST VULNERABLE TO SCHEDULE A SHOT. ANYONE WITH MEDICAL CONDITIONS INCLUDING DIABETES, HYPERTENSION, CANCER, AND EVEN OBESITY CAN TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE NEW RULE.

3/22/2021

AS OF THIS MORNING, EVERYONE FIFTY AND OLDER IS ELIGIBLE FOR A COVID-19 VACCINATION. STATE OFFICIALS UNVEILED THE NEW RULES YESTERDAY. SIGNUPS ON THE STATE'S "AM I ELIGIBLE" VACCINATION SCHEDULING SITE GO ACTIVE THIS MORNING AT EIGHT. THAT INCLUDES APPOINTMENTS AT THE SUNY POLYTECHNIC SITE IN MARCY. THE MOVE COMES AS MORE VACCINE DOSES ARE BECOMING AVAILABLE, INCLUDING AN EXPANSION TO PHARMACIES ACROSS THE STATE. ROUGHLY TWO MILLION OF THE STATE'S RESIDENTS HAVE ALREADY BEEN VACCINATED.