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COVID-19 Case Investigation and Contact Tracing Update

Over the past two weeks, the Cayuga County Health Department has seen an increase in the number of positive COVID-19 cases. From July 1 – July 27, 2021, we have had 59 cases, with over 70 % of the positive people being unvaccinated.

The Cayuga County Health Department continues to perform case investigations and contact tracing as we have been since the beginning of the pandemic. Our staff continue to be challenged with positive individuals who are not honest in identifying who they have been in contact with during their infectious period. A lack of accurate information sharing can be paralyzing in our response to control the spread of the virus and limit the number of new cases from each exposure.

Positive individuals have expressed concern that their contacts (which includes friends and family members) will have to quarantine from the exposure. The positive person feels guilty and responsible for restricting someone's personal interactions. A concern some positives have is that their identity will be disclosed to the contacts and that is not the case. As a health department, our staff protect the privacy of the positive cases and never disclose who an individual was in contact with. The positive individuals who are not forthcoming with contacts do not understand the consequences of not being cooperative. The consequence of not sharing the names of people you are in contact with is that it puts more people in our community at risk of contracting the virus. While we can appreciate these concerns, the Health Department has a job to perform and a responsibility to keep the community safe. Vaccinated individuals who are symptom-free are exempt from quarantine. We ask that all contacts, including those who are vaccinated, be included in our investigation so we can verify vaccination status and provide education.

As the community has resumed normal activities, each positive case has more contacts, which also increases the risk of the virus spreading. We also know from our investigations that unvaccinated individuals have disclosed not wearing their masks around other people which has increased the transmission of the virus to others as well.

Our community has the opportunity to get the spread of the virus under control. It takes each and every one of us working together and doing our part.

The COVID-19 pandemic is not over yet. We ask that you all do your part. We need to protect each other. Continue to follow the common sense guidance:

- Stay home if you are ill or have symptoms of illness and seek health care if needed
- Wear a mask around others if you are unvaccinated



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- Routinely wash your hands
 - Get your COVID-19 vaccine.
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