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Dear Residents,

As of this month we have officially passed the one-year mark since Governor Murphy declared a Public Health Emergency (March 9, 2020). So much has changed for our State and our community during this time. The Bernards Township Health Department (BTHD) has been working diligently for 15 months, often 7 days a week since we were first notified about the Novel Coronavirus, COVID-19. We do our best every day to protect the health and safety of all residents of the six municipalities we serve. There is seldom respite in our response at the BTHD.

As the Governor begins to increase capacity for businesses and gatherings, we are at the front-line processing and enforcing all Executive Orders. As guidance for other establishments like schools' ebbs and flows we are constantly monitoring the changes and answering questions from school officials. Local health departments do not make the decisions for our 45 schools and 10 school districts. We advise the schools by providing trends and offering best practices. Upon consultation we offer an opinion based on current NJDOH guidance, regional CALI scores and other public health expertise. Although sports offer students much needed healthy movement and socializing, we are seeing a rise of cases due to sports. The decision to close schools, quarantine classrooms or cancel sports are done by school officials, individual teams and others at the administrative level.

I want to update you all regarding the COVID-19 vaccine rollout. As I write this letter over 4.3 million vaccine doses have been administered to NJ residents including about 2.7 million individuals with one dose and 1.6 million who are fully vaccinated. Although the process for receiving a COVID-19 vaccine is far from perfect, these numbers are promising in our population of about 8.8 million residents. As for local vaccine administration we are working to connect eligible residents with vaccine appointments. Our Health Department was approved by the state to be a vaccine provider in early February, and we have been actively planning and preparing for a local vaccination clinic. Unfortunately, due to limited vaccine allocation we have not been able to schedule appointments. With the Janssen vaccine recently being approved and the availability of doses increasing we hope to open our clinics soon. Until then we have been participating in daily vaccination calls by the State and advocating to officials to bring the needs of our most vulnerable citizens to the forefront.

For now, we are focusing on what we can control. We have hired a Vulnerable Populations Outreach Coordinator to identify our most at-need residents in our jurisdictions and work to connect them to vaccine appointments. When we are able, we assist the elderly and other populations to sign up for appointments with retail pharmacies, hospital groups and mega-sites. We are working with the Atlantic Visiting Nurses, our contracted nursing agency to secure home visits and vaccine for the homebound. If you are aware of vulnerable populations that are not being engaged, please email us at [covidvax@bernards.org](mailto:covidvax@bernards.org). I encourage everyone to sign up for our weekly COVID-19 update where our office provides resources on making vaccination appointments and where we will notify the public of vaccine clinics when we are able to begin operation.

I understand it has been a long, hard year. In addition to releasing these weekly updates, fielding questions from residents and other businesses, working with the schools and childcare centers, advising long-term care facilities, responding to executive orders, and contact tracing we still attend to all Health Department responsibilities. I have said this before, but it bears repeating: now is not the time to let down your guard. There continues to be an uptick in COVID-19 cases surpassing our neighbors in surrounding states. We have especially seen an influx of cases in under 20, 20s and 50s age groups. Get vaccinated when you are able, continue to wash your hands and wear a mask, and continue to practice physical distancing. Thank you and be well.

Sincerely,

Lucy A. Forgione, MS, MCHES  
Health Officer/Director of Health



## BERNARDS TOWNSHIP HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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## 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-2019) Weekly Update #70

### April 1, 2021 - Resources and Links

**COVID-19 Case Graphs per Municipality** – Case counts come directly from raw data imported from Commcare by the Bernards Township Health Department.

#### Somerset County

- [Bernards Township](#)
- [Bernardsville Borough](#)
- [Peapack and Gladstone Boroughs](#)

#### Morris County

- [Chester Borough](#)
- [Long Hill Township](#)
- [Mendham Borough](#)

#### COVID-19 Weekly Activity Reports

- Provides data on COVID-19 transmission by six regions in NJ.
- Updated every Thursday.
- Used to determine school exclusion and other re-openings.
- This week NJ is overall **HIGH RISK**. Central West (Somerset) is **High**, and Northwest (Morris) is **High**.
- Click [here](#) to view this week's report ending March 27<sup>th</sup>.
- Click [here](#) to view past week's reports.

#### NJ COVID-19 Vaccine Resources

- **Pre-Register for the Vaccine through NJVSS (NJ Vaccine Scheduling System) – <https://covidvaccine.nj.gov/>**
- <https://covid19.nj.gov/pages/vaccine>
- **[COVID19.NJ.GOV/FINDER \(Beta Version\)](#)**
- **[NJDOH COVID-19 Vaccine Info](#)**
- **[CDC COVID-19 Vaccine FAQ](#)**

#### New Jersey COVID-19 Resources

- <https://covid19.nj.gov/> - Visit this webpage to get information on all things COVID-19 in New Jersey.
- COVID-19 New Jersey Dashboard + Positive Test Results available [here](#). Now including trends, hospital census, long term care facilities, psychiatric hospitals, demographics, contact tracing and school info. Updated daily.
- Somerset County NJ COVID-19 Status Dashboard available [here](#).
- Morris County NJ COVID-19 Status Dashboard available [here](#).
- Phone/Text Lines:
  - 2-1-1 for General COVID-19 questions (7am-11 pm)
  - 1-800-962-1253 for Medical Questions (24/7)
  - Text NJCOVID to 898-211 to receive alerts
  - Download COVID Alert NJ app [here](#)
- NJ COVID-19 Vaccine Phone Lines
  - State of NJ Hotline – (855) 568-0545 – Get help scheduling a COVID-19 vaccination appointment. Staffed with live agents from 8am-8pm daily.
  - Somerset County Hotline – (908) 231-7155 – Get answers to your questions about COVID-19 Testing and Vaccinations. M-F 8:30am-8:00pm, Sat 10:00am-4:00pm.
  - Morris County COVID-19 Hotline – (973) 829-8250 – Staffed 7 days a week during business hours.

**Testing Updates** – Click [here](#) for more information on free testing across New Jersey

- **NJ Testing Sites** – [click here](#) for the most up to date information including new locations and testing criteria.
  - **Morris County** – [Click here for Morris County Testing Locations](#).
  - **Somerset County** – [Click here for Somerset County Testing Locations](#).

#### **Other Updates:**

- Next COVID-19 Testing in Bernards Township – April 8<sup>th</sup> starting at 9 am – [Flyer \(English\)](#), [Flyer \(Spanish\)](#)
- Beginning April 2<sup>nd</sup> - [Outdoor gathering limits increase](#) to 200 people effective at 6am.
- Beginning April 5<sup>th</sup> – [Vaccine eligibility](#) opens up for more categories.

*The Bernards Township Health Department is the Contractual Health Agency serving:*

**Bernards Township - Bernardsville Borough - Chester Borough - Long Hill Township - Mendham Borough - Peapack and Gladstone Borough**