News Release

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For Immediate Release
Contact: 518-565-4840

New Cases of COVID-19 Confirmed as Others Recover

Plattsburgh, March 31, 2020. Several new laboratory-confirmed cases of COVID-19 bring the total in Clinton County to 20. This figure represents the total number of positive test results since testing began. To date, 160 tests have come back negative. Five individuals have recovered. Recovered cases are included in the total case count. “CCHD continues to track the total number of individuals who have, or have had the virus,” noted Erin Streiff, Director of Health Care Services for Clinton County Health Department. “Those who have recovered, will always be a part of the total count.” However, she cautioned that new criteria for identifying cases may be used in the days and weeks ahead. As we move forward without enough testing supplies, some cases will be identified through a subjective determination rather than a confirmatory test. These cases, identified through an assessment of symptoms, may be included in the number of positive cases reported. “If you begin seeing differences between the numbers that CCHD, CVPH or the NYS Department of Health are reporting, this may be the cause,” according to Ms. Streiff.

Health Department staff who are taking calls and monitoring social media report that the public has been asking for a definition of recovery. Ms. Streiff responded, “Recovery is defined as resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications; and improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath); and at least 7 days have passed since symptoms first appeared.” She added, “Individuals are expected to continue isolation for at least 3 days (72 hours) after recovery.”

Recovery times vary from person to person, as does the severity of symptoms. Due to the limited supply of testing supplies no follow-up tests are performed. At this time, it is not known if a person can contract COVID-19 a second time, however, individuals who have had the illness will likely have sufficient antibodies to ward off severe complications if they come down with COVID-19 a second time. There is still much that is unknown about this virus but as public health entities work to combat the effects of COVID-19 on the population, scientists and epidemiologists are studying and learning daily about the specific characteristics of the virus.

Questions about testing also abound. The North Country still lacks adequate numbers of test kits. Local leaders have been diligent in their efforts to acquire more kits and are working with political representatives to garner more supplies for the region. Individual provider offices are also seeking and having some success in finding test supplies. In the coming weeks, there will likely be additional testing happening in our community.

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Ms. Streiff noted, “This bears repeating. Assume that anyone you come in contact with could have COVID-19, whether they have been tested or not. Remain vigilant in practicing social distancing.” She further emphasized, “Just because someone is not positive for COVID-19 today does not mean they won’t be positive several days from now. Testing is not treatment. Maintaining social distance and practicing good hand hygiene are still our best defense.”

About the Clinton County Health Department:

The Health Department is an accredited full service department serving the residents of Clinton County. The Health Department’s Mission is to improve and protect the health, well-being and environment of the people of Clinton County. Visit our website at www.clintonhealth.org or connect with us on Facebook (@clintonhealth), Twitter (@ClintonCountyHD), and Instagram (clintoncountyhealth).

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