**News Release**

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For Immediate Release  
Contact: 518-565-4840

**4-18-20COVID-19 Case Update**

**Requirements for Masks and Face Coverings Added to Preventive Measures**

**Plattsburgh, April 18, 2020.** The number of new lab-confirmed cases of COVID-19 rose more slowly in Clinton County this week than in previous weeks, though testing criteria remains the same. On Saturday morning, only one more case than the day before was reported. The number of lab-confirmed positive cases since testing began is now 52.

CCHD provided this detailed update of cases among Clinton County residents. The number of lab-confirmed positive cases to date is 52; of these, 37 have recovered. There are 44 suspect cases (individuals whose symptoms and history indicate COVID-19, but have not been tested), of these 34 have recovered. In addition, since testing began, 3 tests have produced indeterminate results for individuals with symptoms (probable cases). In Clinton County 486 test have been performed. Three individuals (2 lab-confirmed and 1 probable case) have died.

Masked faces have become a common sight as two new additions to Governor Cuomo’s Executive Order 202 took effect this week. As of Wednesday night, workers at essential businesses that continue to operate are required to provide face coverings for employees who have contact with the public. Beginning Friday evening and until further notice, members of the public are expected to wear a cloth face-covering or mask when they are outside of their home and not able to maintain a distance of at least six feet between themselves and others.

The order does not specify any particular type of mask, but it must cover the nose and mouth. Health advocates warn that standard practices to minimize risk of transferring germs when using a mask should be the norm no matter what type of mask or face covering is used.

Erin Streiff, Director of Health Care Services for the Clinton County Health Department (CCHD) stated, “Using a mask to prevent spreading illness to others is a different approach than we are used to. We usually use a mask to avoid breathing in something that we don’t want in our lungs. In this case, we are protecting each other by keeping any germs to ourselves. Just about any type of face-covering that fits well over the lower face can serve that purpose.”

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“Persons who have any physical mobility or other needs, call the telephone number above to arrange for accommodations”
A wide variety of masks and face coverings were on display on Friday as residents prepared for the new order to take effect. Anything from painter’s masks to bandanas and winter scarves were seen. Some sported surgical masks while others wore homemade cloth versions. All of these meet the intent of the Governor’s Order.

Ms. Streiff offered this advice, “Whatever type of face covering you use, it is important to remember not to touch your eyes, nose, and mouth when removing it. Wash your hands before putting a mask on, and immediately after removing it. She also offered specific guidance, “Remove your mask by touching only the loops or straps. Lift the loop off one ear first, then the other. If you are using a non-washable mask, throw it away after use OR allow it to dry between uses. Place the mask in a paper bag to dry. Use a different paper bag each time.”

Over the last few weeks, many residents have been producing homemade cloth masks for themselves, their families and for others in the community. With the new requirement, even more masks will be needed, and commercially produced masks are still rarely available at stores or through online purchase. Instructions on how to make both sew and no-sew face-coverings can be found at https://bit.ly/2KgJEkk.

All face-coverings should:

- fit snugly but comfortably against the side of the face;
- be secured with ties or ear loops;
- include multiple layers of fabric;
- allow for breathing without restriction; and
- be able to be laundered and machine dried without damage or change to shape.

“Laundering or allowing a mask to dry between uses are important safety measures,” according to Ms. Streiff. She also noted that once a mask has been put on, it should remain on until it is no longer needed. Taking a mask on and off frequently increases your risk of infection from germs that may be on the outer surface of the mask.”

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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