



May 8, 2020

For Immediate Release

For More Information:

Andrea Whitmarsh, Public Information Officer

518-873-3546 | andrea.whitmarsh@essexcountyny.gov

State Coordinating COVID-19 Testing of Nursing Home Residents & Employees

Elizabethtown, N.Y. New York State is forging ahead with a phased approach to reopen. While ensuring precautions are in place to maintain the continued downward trend in hospitalizations, new infections, and deaths – preventing nursing home infections remain a major priority.

COVID-19 has been detected in multiple communities around New York State and is impacting vulnerable populations at higher rates. New York State is partnering with counties to quickly test all nursing home residents and staff across the state. To begin this initiative, the State reached out to county leadership to seek interest in partnering on nursing home testing. Identified counties received an initial shipment of testing kits on May 7. NYS Department of Health (NYSDOH) is working with NYS Association of County Health Officials (NYSACHO) and local health departments on scheduling testing in every nursing home facility to determine next steps in controlling this outbreak.

“Nursing home facilities house some of our most vulnerable populations – older adults, individuals with significant pre-existing health conditions, and those with comorbidities that put them at a much greater risk for severe complications from COVID infections”, noted Linda Beers, Director of Public Health for Essex County Health Department (ECHD). “Testing residents and staff will provide the information we need to keep this population safe – by quickly identifying, isolating, and tracing contacts of any positive cases.”

The Essex County Health Department will continue to work with the state to coordinate this testing and any follow up necessary. “We received our first shipments of test kits this week,” Beers confirmed. Nursing home staff at Elderwood of Uihlein at Lake Placid, Elderwood at Ticonderoga, and Essex Center for Rehabilitation and Healthcare in Elizabethtown have stepped up to take on the additional responsibility to conduct the testing of residents and employees. “We are encouraged that the state is taking on this initiative and we will work to support them and the nursing homes in meeting any needs. We commend our nursing homes for their diligence, partnership, care and accountability, which extends above and beyond normal day-to-day operations,” Beers continued.

Testing is slated to occur though next week at the Essex County facilities. For more information about the state’s reopening strategy, go to: <https://www.governor.ny.gov/programs/new-york-forward>

###