



Department of Public Health

Monroe County, New York

Adam J. Bello
County Executive

Michael D. Mendoza, MD, MPH, MS
Commissioner of Public Health

For Immediate Release

Tuesday, December 12, 2023

Monroe County Public Health Commissioner and Local Healthcare Leaders Urge Precautions as Respiratory Viruses Spread

- *The **COVID-19** hospital admission level in Monroe County is now Medium, and the CDC is recommending people at higher risk for severe illness wear a mask when visiting indoor, public places.*
- *The number of **influenza** cases in Monroe County has more than doubled since the end of November. So far, two deaths have been attributed to the flu this season.*
- *Since the beginning of October, nearly 100 infants, children and adults have been hospitalized for **RSV**.*

On Tuesday, **Monroe County Commissioner of Public Health Dr. Michael Mendoza** and other local leaders urged County residents to take precautions as the spread of respiratory viruses rapidly increases, threatening to overwhelm local hospitals and other healthcare providers this holiday season.

“As you gather with family, friends and colleagues to celebrate over the coming days and weeks, please take steps to help reduce the spread of COVID-19, influenza and RSV,” Dr. Mendoza said. “By staying healthy or staying home when you are sick, you will help reduce the growing burden on our healthcare community.”

The Department of Public Health offered the following preventive tips:



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- Get vaccinated today. It is not too late. Contact your healthcare provider or pharmacy to determine the appropriate vaccines for you and make an appointment.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick and stay home if you are sick. Employers are encouraged to remain flexible to prevent contamination in the workplace.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue or sleeve, keep your hands away from your face, and wash your hands often. Regularly clean frequently touched surfaces like doorknobs.
- Wear a close-fitting KN95 or N95 mask in indoor, public spaces. Remember, masks are not effective when worn loosely or under the nose or chin.

Dr. Mendoza was joined by **Dr. Linda Clark, President and CEO of Jordan Health Center; Dr. Michael Apostolakos, Chief Medical Officer for Strong Memorial and Highland Hospitals; and Dr. Robert Mayo, Chief Medical Officer for Rochester Regional Health.** They underscored the need for preventive actions and urged people who do get sick to seek alternatives to the Emergency Department unless they are in need of immediate care.

- University of Rochester Medical Center patients should either contact their primary healthcare provider, receive a virtual visit via smartphone or computer, or go to an urgent care. (Please note: individuals can access the UR Medicine virtual visits even if they do not have a primary care provider in the system.) For more information, go to www.urmc.rochester.edu/get-care-now.
- Rochester Regional Health patients should either contact their primary healthcare provider, receive a virtual visit via smartphone or computer, or go to an urgent care. (Please note: individuals can access the RRH virtual visits even if they do not have a primary care provider in the system.) For more information, go to www.rochesterregional.org/get-care-now.
- Jordan Health is urging patients to contact their primary care physician. If you need a healthcare provider or are concerned about healthcare coverage, contact Jordan Health at (585) 423-5800 or <https://jordanhealth.org/services/overview/>.



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Wade Norwood, Chief Executive Officer of Common Ground Health, highlighted the need to raise awareness in underserved communities, who are disproportionately at risk for severe illness from respiratory viruses. Common Ground Health is teaming up with the Department of Public Health to conduct outreach in these areas.

Dr. Ghinwa Dumyati, Director of the Communicable Diseases Surveillance & Prevention Program at URM Center for Community Health & Prevention, said the Center is tracking influenza and RSV cases, hospitalizations and deaths. The public can access this information at www.rochealthdata.org.

For additional information on respiratory illness, vaccines and local data sources, please visit <https://www.monroecounty.gov/health-covid-flu-rsv>.

