

View this email in your browser



91st Assembly District
Larchmont - Mamaroneck - New Rochelle - Port Chester - Rye Brook and Rye

November 20, 2020

Dear Friends,

There is no doubt that Covid-19 infections and illnesses are increasing in Westchester, throughout New York State and the nation.

In October, New York instituted a Cluster Zone Strategy to focus attention and resources where Covid-19 infections spike. A handful of Cluster Zones were identified in October. The first Westchester zone was designated two weeks ago. This week five new zones were added in Westchester with 23 zones designated statewide. In Westchester, zones have been designated in parts of New Rochelle, Ossining, Peekskill, Port Chester, Tarrytown and Yonkers.

Increased Covid-19 infections and hospitalizations are a warning sign to everyone, whether or not your community includes one of these zones. Relaxed social practices, as a result of lower infection rates over the summer, combined with the colder weather and pandemic fatigue have all contributed to increased rates of infection here and throughout the country.

We each have a singular responsibility to follow best practices in order to protect our friends, family and anyone we encounter. This is a highly contagious, dangerous disease that has taken over a quarter of a million lives in our country. Many survivors continue to experience long-lasting medical complications.

As we approach the holiday season, it is especially important to stay vigilant in the face of increasing infection rates right here in Westchester.

I am working with local governments, school districts and not-for-profits to address the many Covid-19 related issues that arise. Covid-19 has created many new challenges and needs for our families and small businesses, so please let me know how my office can be of assistance to you.

This update also includes news of NYS Public Service Commission enforcement action against New York electric utility companies for failures in response to Tropical Storm Isaias this past August.

Warm regards,

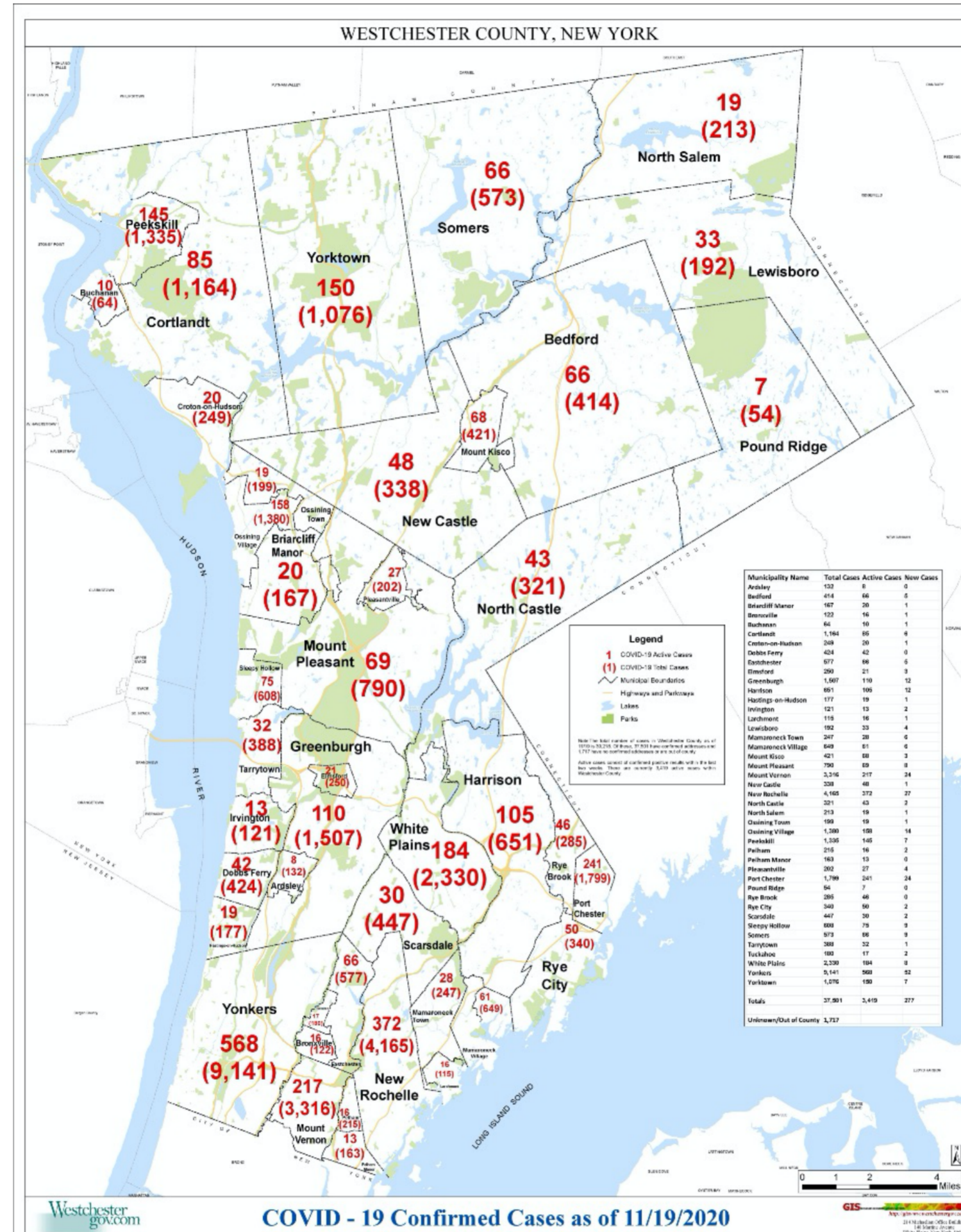


On Friday I joined local officials for the delivery of masks and sanitizing fluid from the state and county to New Rochelle residents. I was joined by County Executive George Latimer, Mayor Noam Bramson, County Legislator Terry Clements, City Councilwomen Yadira Ramos-Herbert and Martha Lopez-Hanratty.

Covid-19 Continues to Increase Across Westchester County and NYS

Westchester County currently has a positivity rate of 3.5% while the statewide average is about 2.7% (County tracker is available [HERE](#)). The [Cluster Action Initiative](#) focuses on areas that have positivity rates above 3% with yellow, orange and red designations.

Several clusters were added to Westchester this week including: New Rochelle, Yonkers, Tarrytown, Ossining and Peekskill. Port Chester was elevated to an 'orange zone' designation.



Cluster Action Initiative

Type of Activity	Red	Orange	Yellow
Non-Essential Gatherings	Prohibited	10 people maximum, indoors and outdoors	10 people maximum, indoors and outdoors
House of Worship	Lesser of: 25% of maximum capacity 10 people	Lesser of: 33% of maximum capacity 25 people	50% of maximum capacity
Businesses	Non-essential businesses are closed	Certain high-risk, non-essential businesses (eg, gyms, fitness centers and classes, barber shops, hair salons, personal care services) are closed.	Open
Dining	Takeout or delivery only	Outdoor dining, takeout or delivery only, 4 person maximum per table	Indoor and outdoor dining permitted, 4 person maximum per table; bars and restaurants close at midnight
Schools	Closed* Remote-only	Closed* Remote-only	Open 20% weekly testing of in-person students and faculty

*Schools may reopen if they follow new guidelines that require mass testing in schools before they reopen followed by vigilant symptom and exposure screening conducted daily. [See new guidelines.](#)

Maps of Cluster Zones

Covid-19 Testing

To find a testing site near you and to make an appointment please visit the [NY State Health Department](#) or call the New York State COVID-19 Hotline at 1-888-364-3065.

Testing is free for all New Yorkers at NYS run test sites.

[Find a Test Site Near You](#)



Covid Alert New York

New phone app flags COVID-19 exposure. Add your phone. Stop the spread.

The state has launched a mobile contact tracing app that will notify you if you've potentially been exposed to a COVID-19-positive person.

If a person using the app spends 10 minutes within six feet of you, your phones will swap random codes to remember the contact. If the other app user tests positive for the virus within the next few days, the app can send you an alert after checking your codes.

Search for **'Covid Alert New York'** in the App Store to download.

School and College COVID-19 Dashboard Available Online

The online dashboard that allows anyone to check on reported COVID-19 cases in any school, college or university in the state is now live. Governor Cuomo has required that all schools report COVID-19 cases to the NYS Department of Health on a daily basis. The reporting requirement includes all public and private schools, charter schools and all colleges and universities. In addition, the Department of Health has issues [additional guidance](#) for K-12 schools that find themselves in a 'yellow zone' and must meet certain school population testing requirements in order to maintain in person learning.

[School and University Covid-19 Statewide Tracker](#)



PSC Announces Utility Company Fines Over Tropical Storm Isaias Response Failures

This week, the NYS Public Service Commission released its investigatory report analyzing the performance of New York's electric utilities in their response to Tropical Storm Isaias, the August 2020 storm that caused widespread power outages in Westchester and other parts of the state. The order charges three of the state's largest utilities, Con Edison, O&R and Central Hudson, with penalties totaling \$137.3 million. Con Edison and O&R also face the possibility of license revocation. Con Ed was charged with a potential of \$102.3 million in penalties for 33 apparent violations. The utilities have 10 days to respond to the Department's recommendations on how to improve their response and restoration efforts and 30 days to respond regarding a potential penalty action.

The PSC's initial investigation showed that Con Edison's response to the storm was wholly inadequate and that Con Edison failed to follow its Commission-ordered Emergency Response Plan's requirements relating to its damage assessment responsibilities and its published estimated time of restoration notices. Recognizing prior instances when Con Edison's storm event response had fallen short of legal requirements, staff decided that its investigation would include the determination of whether Con Edison's license should be revoked based on these apparent violations. Con Edison's prior failures to adequately prepare and respond to emergencies was also taken into consideration.

As a member of the Assembly Committee on Corporations, Authorities and Commissions that has jurisdiction over the laws controlling the Public Service Commission, I have been working with an ad hoc group of local officials, state legislators and county officials on reviewing the August storm response and developing proposals for state legislation and broader Public Service Commission. My focus has been on the importance of instituting a time-based service restoration standard: a target to meet for restoration of service. Utilities should have the necessary levels of staffing, equipment and outside assistance to restore service in a timely manner. Six to ten days without service is unacceptable. In addition to the staffing inadequacies, there is need for improvement in response planning, coordination with local governments and in providing customers with accurate information about the status of outages and restoration times.

