

Governor Cuomo Briefing

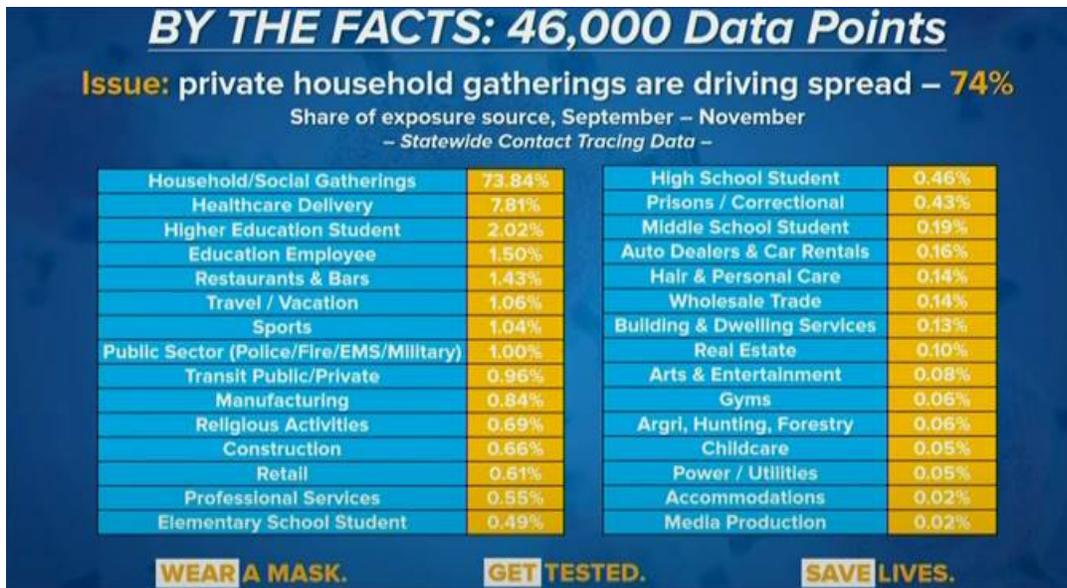
- Today's press briefing took place in the State Capitol. Several members of Congress joined the briefing via teleconference including Representatives Hakeem Jeffries, Grace Meng, Karen Bass, Joaquin Castro, and Deb Haaland. Governor Cuomo was also joined at the briefing by:
 - Melissa DeRosa, Secretary to the Governor;
 - Robert Mujica, Budget Director;
 - Dr. Jim Malatras, State University of New York (SUNY) Chancellor;
 - Larry Schwartz, former Secretary to the Governor;
 - Dr. Howard Zucker, NYS Department of Health Commissioner; and
 - Gareth Rhodes, Deputy Superintendent & Special Counsel at NYS Department of Financial Services.
- **VACCINE APPROVAL:** Yesterday, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) Vaccines and Related Biological Products Advisory Committee recommended the Pfizer developed COVID-19 vaccine for emergency-use authorization. Working with Dr. Zucker, New York's independent Clinical Advisory Task Force has unanimously approved the Pfizer vaccine as safe for administration.
- **WINTER PLAN:** Positivity rates and hospitalization rates continue to increase. New York is recalibrating protocols with a new Winter Plan based on the most recent public health data.



- SCHOOL SAFETY:** Data has shown that schools have proven to be safer for students and faculty than local communities in terms of COVID-19 transmission and infection rate. Initially, experts believed schools would be sources of transmission similar to mass gatherings. However, due to high compliance with the protocols put in place, the data has shown that the positivity rates in schools is lower than the surrounding communities. Local governments have had a large degree of control in determining whether schools remain open or go to remote learning, but Governor Cuomo advocated that schools should remain open unless there is data that the school has a problematic infection rate.
- HOSPITALIZATION RATES:** Hospitalization rates are increasing dramatically across the State, nation, and world. However, advancements in treatment methods have reduced the length of stay in hospitals for COVID patients from 11 days at the beginning of the pandemic, to five days. At the beginning of the pandemic, 23% of people hospitalized would ultimately pass away, currently that rate sits at 8 percent.



- NEW CASE DATA:** Governor Cuomo released industry specific information based on 46,000 data points from contact tracing efforts that were able to determine a known source of transmission. According to contact tracing data from September through November, private gatherings are driving most of the recent COVID-19 spread, with 74% of new cases originating from small gatherings. The next leading contributor to spread is healthcare delivery at 7.81 percent. Restaurants and bars contribute up to 1.43% of exposure sources and gyms contribute 0.06% of exposure sources.



- RATE OF TRANSMISSION:** New York’s current rate of transmission is now 1.3, meaning each person who becomes infected then infects 1.3 additional people. Previously, New York’s rate of transmission had been at or below one. The rate of transmission is higher in dense urban areas.



- DATA CONSIDERATIONS:** The State is considering positivity and hospitalization rates, hospital capacity, density, transmission rates, and risk level of economic activities while making decisions for restrictions and protocols in the new Winter Plan.



- **NEW COLOR ZONE METRICS:** The State is evaluating the available public health data and will make announcements regarding color zone designations on Monday, December 14th. Below are the new metrics for determining color zone designations.
- *Red Zones:* A “red zone” will be declared when a region is 21 days from 90% hospital capacity. “Red Zone” designation will put a region under NY on PAUSE restrictions, which is the Governor’s Executive Order from March 22nd, implementing a 10-point policy which closed non-essential businesses and limited public interactions to reduce the spread of COVID-19.
- *Orange Zones:* A region will be designated an “orange zone” if it has 4% or higher positivity rate over the last 10 days AND 85% hospital capacity OR the NYS Department of Health (DOH) determines the region has an unacceptably high rate of hospital admissions.
- *Yellow Zones:* An area will be designated as a “yellow zone” if it reaches 3% positivity rate over 10 days AND the cluster is in the top 10% for hospital admissions per capita over the past week and experiences week-over-week growth in daily admissions.



- **INDOOR DINING:** Indoor dining in New York City will be closed starting Monday, December 14th. Outdoor dining, takeout, and delivery will be allowed to continue. The State is studying

the data for areas outside New York City and will make a determination Monday, on whether possible closures or capacity restrictions will be implemented. Governor Cuomo said that infections originating in restaurants have reduced due to safety protocols, but the industry is still a driver of spread. The Governor called on the Federal Government to provide relief to bars and restaurants in the next COVID-19 package. New York will extend the commercial eviction moratorium beyond the current January 1st expiration date.

- When asked why indoor dining should be closed if it accounts for 1.43% of new cases, Governor Cuomo reiterated that most transmissions are coming from private residences, but the State has limited power to combat that type of gathering. New York has a 10-person limit on gatherings in private settings. Closing indoor dining is one of the few places the State can make a difference in preventing spread. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has issued guidance that indoor dining is a particularly risky activity due to patrons needing to remove masks while eating.



- **GYMS AND SALONS:** Fitness centers and salons will be allowed to remain open in “orange zones” at 25% capacity. The State will increase testing and regulations to operate in an “orange zone.” Salons will be required to test employees weekly instead of bi-weekly. Recent data has shown that these facilities are not major contributors of spread due to the protocols in place, such as mask wearing at all times.



- **NEW HOSPITAL RULES:** Hospitals must increase capacity by 25 percent. Hospital capacity must also remain under 85% capacity by either adding additional capacity, reducing elective surgeries, or both. Once a hospital reaches 85% capacity it is considered “critical hospital capacity.” Every hospital must have a 90-day stockpile of personal protective equipment (PPE).
- **STATEN ISLAND:** Staten island represents just 5% of New York City’s population, but has contributed 25% of the City’s total deaths. Governor Cuomo urged Staten Islanders to follow the guidance set by the Trump Administration and the Biden Transition Team. The rules are in place to benefit everyone and should not be a political issue.



- **VACCINE:** In addition to the initial 170,000 doses of the Pfizer vaccine expected imminently, New York will receive enough doses of the Moderna vaccine for 346,000 people, which is expected to be delivered the week of December 21st.

- **VACCINE FAIRNESS:** Governor Cuomo sent a letter to Secretary of U.S. Health and Human Services Alex Azar yesterday demanding the Federal Government issue plans for a fair distribution of the vaccine to underserved communities. Members of the U.S. House of Representatives Hakeem Jeffries, Grace Meng, Karen Bass, Joaquin Castro, and Deb Haaland joined the briefing via teleconference to discuss the importance of distributing the vaccine in a fair and just manner.