Allegany COUNTY New York

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

County Office Building,
7 Court Street, Room #30
Belmont, New York 14813
Phone: (585) 268-9250
Fax: (585) 268-9264

Theresa Moore	Jami D'Arcy	Tyler J. Shaw, MHA	Brittney Schuld	David Rahr
Supervising PHE	Env. Health Director	Public Health Director	DPS	Accountant

TO: All Media Sources
FROM: Theresa K. Moore, Supervising Public Health Educator/Public Information Officer
RE: JOINT STATEMENT FROM ALLEGANY, CATTARAUGUS, CHAUTAUQUA, ERIE AND NIAGARA COUNTY DEPARTMENTS OF HEALTH REGARDING TRAVEL AND QUARANTINE
DATE: February 4, 2021

News Release: JOINT STATEMENT FROM ALLEGANY, CATTARAUGUS, CHAUTAUQUA, ERIE, AND NIAGARA COUNTY DEPARTMENTS OF HEALTH REGARDING TRAVEL AND QUARANTINE

Upcoming school breaks raise concerns about travel-based COVID-19 cases

ALLEGANY COUNTY, NY – The leaders of the five Western New York (WNY) county health departments (Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie, and Niagara) are providing the following joint statement related to the upcoming school breaks and the New York State (NYS) Travel Advisory.

Our departments share a common goal to keep the students, families, and staff associated with schools healthy and safe and to keep schools open. Reducing the risk of travel-based cases, and reducing the spread of variant COVID-19 strains to and within WNY communities is one part of our collective COVID-19 response.

With vacation breaks scheduled in February and April for many schools, our departments are strongly discouraging travel to areas of the country with high rates of COVID-19 transmission, known cases of variant COVID-19 strains, or areas that do not have COVID-19 safety measures in place. **All NYS Travel Advisory guidance applies because vaccinated individuals may still be able to infect others following an exposure to the virus.**

If school staff or families choose to travel, NYS Travel Advisory guidance will apply for travelers who are in a non-contiguous state for more than 24 hours:

- Quarantine Option: Travelers must quarantine for 10 days following arrival in NYS.
  OR
- Quarantine PLUS Test Option:
  - Travelers must obtain a diagnostic COVID-19 test within three days of departure, prior to arrival in NYS.
  - And, the traveler must, upon arrival in NYS, quarantine for three days.
  - And, on day 4 of their quarantine, the traveler must obtain another COVID-19 diagnostic test. If both test results are negative, the traveler may exit quarantine early upon receipt of the second negative diagnostic test.

County health departments have fielded questions from school leaders about whether school staff who have received one or both doses of the COVID-19 vaccine need to quarantine after out-of-state travel. To date, the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) has not issued any guidance that removes a quarantine requirement for people who have been vaccinated against COVID-19. All Travel Advisory guidance applies.

Vacation breaks in other parts of the country also mean that travelers could arrive for visits into WNY. For those arriving for visits, our departments advise visitors to heed the NYS Travel Advisory and take other public health measures like wearing masks, maintaining social distancing, staying home when sick and avoiding gatherings.

For staff and families who choose to travel to areas with high levels of COVID-19 transmission, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has information for travelers to consider before, during, and after travel. **Households where someone is at increased risk for getting very sick from COVID-19, including adults over 65 and individuals with certain chronic medical conditions, should seriously consider postponing travel**. Individuals who do not show COVID-19 symptoms may still be infected and able to spread COVID-19 to others. That includes children, who may have no symptoms or very mild symptoms.

As a reminder, New York State Department of Health guidance from November 2020 noted that although teachers, school staff, and child care workers are considered essential, the NYS Travel Advisory exemption for essential workers does not apply to teachers, school employees, or child care workers, due to the sensitivity of these congregate settings.

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NYS Travel Advisory: https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/covid-19-travel-advisory
NYSDOH Interim Guidance for Quarantine Restrictions on Travelers Arriving in NYS Following Out of State Travel:
https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2020/11/interm_guidance_travel_advisory.pdf
CDC Travel Guidance During COVID-19: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/travel-during-covid19.html
CDC COVID-19, People with Certain Medical Conditions: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-with-medical-conditions.html
CDC Information on New Variants of the Virus that causes COVID-19: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/transmission/variant.html

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Allegany County Department of Health: www.alleganyco.com/health-department
Cattaraugus County Department of Health: www.cattco.org/health
Chautauqua County Department of Health: www.chqgov.com/public-health/public-health
Erie County Department of Health: www.erie.gov/health
Niagara County Department of Health: www.niagaracounty.com/health

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