Allegany COUNTY New York

**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**

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**TO: All Media Sources**
**FROM: Tyler J. Shaw, Public Health Director**
**RE: Allegany County NOT Adopting Test to Stay Pilot**
**DATE: November 10, 2021**

**News Release: Allegany County NOT Adopting Test to Stay Pilot**

**BELMONT, NY**- The "Test to Stay" (TTS) program has been in the news and is being piloted in some areas of New York State. The "Test to Stay" program allows close school contacts to attend school but remain in quarantine outside of school hours if they test negative on each school day for seven days after exposure. The "Test to Stay" pilot program is not recommended by the New York State Department of Health at this time. Under the current New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) school guidance, unvaccinated close contacts of people with COVID-19 are not allowed to attend school and must stay home in quarantine.

The definition of a close contact in the classroom setting is any individual (student to student) who is less than 3ft for longer than a cumulative 15-minute period over 24 hours. This close contact definition is not applicable to teacher-to-teacher or student to teacher and that definition is consistent with the CDC and is within 6ft of a confirmed positive case for longer than a cumulative 15-minute period over 24 hours.

After careful consideration, feedback from all of our school districts, and information gathering regarding the Test to Stay pilot program, Allegany County will **NOT** be adopting this program at this time. We recognize the need to balance in-person learning with the safety of our schools and community and this decision was made with our current situation across all of the school districts in mind. The current resources for the required rapid testing are not readily and equitably available across Allegany County. We currently have the highest 7-day average for COVID-19 cases per 100K in the state. We will analyze the data once our community spread is under control and consult with our school districts again after January 1, 2022, in order to reassess the situation and resources.

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