CORTLAND COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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TO: Local Media

FROM: Nicole Anjeski, Public Health Director, Cortland County Health Department

RE: Cortland County Health Department urges residents to get vaccinated for COVID-19 and Flu, Updates COVID-19 data reporting

DATE: 09/29/2022

COVID-19 and Flu Vaccination

The Cortland County Health Department urges all Cortland County residents to get their COVID-19 and Flu vaccine as soon as possible. Vaccination is safe and is the best way to prevent serious illness from COVID-19 and Flu in our community. If you have questions, or are concerned about receiving either vaccination, contact your healthcare provider so they can assist you in making the most informed decision about receiving the Flu and/or COVID-19 vaccine this year.

Residents should know:

- Everyone ages 6 months and older can receive the COVID-19 vaccine and Flu vaccine.
- You can get the COVID-19 and Flu vaccine at the same time.
- Being vaccinated can reduce the seriousness of your illness if you do get COVID-19 or Flu.
- The COVID-19 and Flu vaccines are safe to receive if you are pregnant, breastfeeding, or thinking about becoming pregnant in the future.
- You cannot get the Flu from the Flu vaccine and you cannot get COVID-19 from the COVID-19 vaccine. Symptoms that occur after vaccination are signs that your body is building protection and will go away in a few days. It takes two weeks for the vaccines to provide full protection.
- If you are 12 years or older, and it has been at least two months since your last COVID-19 booster, you should receive the updated booster that protects against Omicron.

Residents can find a location to get vaccinated at the following link: https://www.vaccines.gov/

COVID-19 Data Reporting Update

The Cortland County Health Department has refreshed the look of the COVID-19 Data Dashboard and added additional information and resources for community members. The Cortland County COVID-19 Dashboard can be found here: https://sites.google.com/view/cortgovhealthcoviddata/daily-summary

WORKING TO BUILD A HEALTHY COMMUNITY SINCE 1929

The dashboard updates include several upcoming changes that community members should be aware of. To align with the Cortland County Health Department's process for reporting of all other communicable diseases, starting October 3rd, 2022, CCHD will transition to only tracking and reporting COVID-19 tests confirmed through the Electronic Clinical Laboratory Reporting System (ECLRS). ECLRS is a NYSDOH database that contains reported results from all the labs testing samples from New York State residents.

Previously, Cortland County COVID-19 daily, weekly, and total case counts were sourced from the New York State Communicable Disease Case Management System (Commcare). Commcare includes laboratory confirmed positive results derived from ECLRS and positive home test results that were reported to CCHD via the home test reporting form on the CCHD website and uploaded into the Commcare system. The Commcare system was created to serve as a tool for local health departments to organize case management activities (i.e. isolation and quarantine) and not as a long term data reporting platform. As we enter yet another phase of the pandemic, it is time to align our COVID-19 data reporting with the same sources used by NYSDOH and the local reporting of all other communicable diseases.

This transition means that starting October 3rd:
1. Residents should follow CDC guidance when they test positive using a home test or a test administered from a medical provider. This includes; isolating for 5 days, telling close contacts, wearing a well-fitting mask around others, seeking emergency care if you have emergency warning signs, and telling your healthcare provider. Home tests should no longer be reported to the Cortland County Health Department.
    a. More information on what to do if you test positive for COVID-19 using a home test can be found here: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/testing/self-testing.html
2. The "Cases" page of the Cortland County COVID-19 Dashboard will be replaced with the "Testing" page for the official count of positive cases in Cortland County since March 2022 and the daily count of positive tests. This adjustment will align our Cortland County count with the count reported by New York State on their COVID-19 dashboards.
3. Total COVID-19 deaths for Cortland County will continue to be sourced from the NYSDOH and reported on the summary page of the Cortland County dashboard.

This transition will allow CCHD staff to focus efforts and resources on increasing COVID-19 vaccine confidence and COVID-19 vaccination rates in the Cortland County community and improving our infrastructure for reporting and tracking other community health priorities related to the Community Health Improvement Plan.