

# Hochul announces 'Winter Surge Plan 2.0' to stem COVID cases

## Indoor masking to continue until Feb. 1

✓ *As New York battles winter surge, governor unveils targeted plan 'to protect vulnerable New Yorkers, save lives & support critical industries'*

✓ *Builds on ongoing efforts including distribution of millions of test kits, actions to boost hospital capacity and address staffing shortages, and ongoing vaccination & booster outreach*

Gov. Kathy Hochul recently announced "Winter Surge Plan 2.0," a new, targeted effort to bolster New York's fight against the winter surge. Her plan focuses on five core areas: keeping students in school, doubling down on masks and testing, preventing severe illness and death, increasing access to vaccines and boosters, and working together with local leaders. Hours before the New Year began, Hochul also urged New Yorkers to celebrate New Year's Eve in a safe, responsible way.

Hochul said, "We can get through this surge through targeted actions, partnerships with local leaders, and by taking common sense steps to keep us all safe: Get vaccinated, get boosted, and wear a mask indoors."

Acting State Health Commissioner Dr. Mary T. Bassett said,

"We have every tool to keep our families and communities safe. We must ensure we use them all. Gov. Hochul's targeted plan to expand vaccination and booster access, mask and test, and increase measures to protect our health care workers is the comprehensive strategy needed to combat the fast-spreading omicron variant. Leveraging these layered mitigation tactics is how we will protect the health of New Yorkers and effectively manage the winter surge."

### Hochul's Plan

**1. Keep schools open:** After two years of remote learning and school closures, Hochul is focused on keeping students in school in the upcoming year. The first plank of her five-part plan includes:

✓ *Providing tests to students and school districts:* 5.56 million tests arrived for schools this week and between 6 and 7 million more are expected to arrive in the coming days. New York has mobilized 40 trucks and 86 state personnel to distribute tests. Overall, New York has secured 37 million tests for distribution.

✓ *Working with counties to implement "test-to-stay":* Hochul's team said, "Test-to-stay" policies



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have proven successful at keeping our kids safe and schools open." If a student tests positive, classmates can take a test kit back home with them and return to the classroom upon receiving a negative result instead of mandatory quarantining.

✓ *Keeping college students and faculty safe:* SUNY and CUNY will be introducing a new require-

ment for all students to get boosters, campuses will require mandatory mask wearing in public indoor spaces, and will require all faculty to be vaccinated. Students will also be required to submit negative tests upon returning to campus.

**2. Keep masking, keep testing:** Hochul's team said the governor "recognizes that, to stop

the spread of the virus, New Yorkers must continue wearing masks and getting tested for COVID." Hochul will:

✓ *Extend the mask-or-vax requirement:* The Department of Health will extend the mask-or-vaccine requirement for an additional two weeks, protecting workers and allowing businesses to remain open. The requirement wherein people have to wear a mask indoors (unless the site is limited to vaccinated patrons) will continue until Feb. 1.

✓ *Make masks more widely available:* New York has distributed 5 million KN-95 masks, and more will be distributed through state legislators. Hundreds of thousands of masks will also be distributed for nursing home visitors.

✓ *Launch new testing sites:* Hochul will open six new testing sites on Jan. 4, totaling 19 state-run sites statewide. Additionally, Hochul announced the launch of two new testing sites at MTA stations, in addition to previously announced MTA pop-ups.

**3. Preventing severe illness and death:** With case counts rising, Hochul is making it a priority to prevent severe illness and **SEE HOCHUL, continued on Page 9**

## 10 SUNY campus coronavirus testing sites open across New York

Additional testing sites to open week of Jan. 10

Gov. Kathy Hochul on Tuesday announced the opening of 10 SUNY campus-based COVID-19

test sites. Additionally, the governor announced the second round of sites slated to open the week of Jan. 10.

"As we continue to combat the

winter surge, it is essential that we provide more access to testing for New Yorkers to help limit the spread of this virus," Hochul said. "With 10 sites opening by the

end of this week and additional sites by the end of the next, we are quickly ramping up our ability to focus our resources where they are needed. While testing is critically important, we must ensure we continue to focus on all the tools available to us: get vaccinated, get boosted, and wear a mask."

The following local sites are open and provide appointment-based and walk-in COVID-19 testing from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. weekdays:

- **University at Buffalo Community Testing Site**  
Center for Tomorrow Building  
Flint Road, Buffalo
- **Buffalo State College Community Testing Site**  
Alumni Center  
667 Grant St., Buffalo

Each site will maintain capacity for approximately 225 appointments per day and up to 50 walk-ins.

As part of round two of this

partnership, additional SUNY campus-based test sites will be established. Those sites will include community testing sites at:

- ✓ SUNY Geneseo
- ✓ SUNY New Paltz
- ✓ SUNY Potsdam
- ✓ SUNY Fredonia
- ✓ SUNY Brockport
- ✓ Farmingdale State College
- ✓ Morrisville State College
- ✓ SUNY Canton
- ✓ SUNY Cobleskill
- ✓ SUNY Polytechnic Institute

Opening dates and hours of operation for the sites included in this expansion will be announced in the coming days.

In addition to the SUNY-based testing sites, Syracuse University has also opened a testing site at the Carrier Dome. This site is now open and will operate from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Sunday through Friday. At this site, 4,000 tests will be conducted a day. The National Guard will assist with staffing.



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