

AROUND NIAGARA COUNTY

Niagara County Department of Health offers free drive-thru COVID-19 testing

BY THE NIAGARA COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Testing for COVID-19 leads to quick identification of cases, medical support for those that need it, and immediate isolation of the person to prevent spread. Close contacts to positive cases are considered quarantines to further reduce spread.

"Testing remains a vital tool for public health to monitor the COVID-19 infection rate as well as to reduce the impact of a second wave this fall," stated Public Health Director Daniel J. Stapleton.

The Niagara County Department of Health offers a free drive-thru testing every Wednesday starting with appointments as early as 9:30 a.m. at the Public Safety Training Facility in Lockport.

"We have been offering free sample collection since early April in partnership with Niagara County Emergency Management, Niagara County Sheriff's Office, Haz-Mat and our Niagara County Medical Reserve Corps Volunteers," stated Elise Pignatara, director of Public Health Planning and Emergency Preparedness.

Aligned with the New York state COVID-19 diagnostic testing guidance, eligibility for testing has evolved over time.

"We have expanded eligibility and encourage persons interested in COVID-19 testing to call 716-278-1900 to preregister," Stapleton said. "Our testing site is free, it does not require a doctor's order, and our nurses will call you with results in about two to four days."

"It is possible to have COVID-19 with minimal or even no symptoms at all. It is important that all eligible persons receive

testing," Nursing Director Laurie Schoenfeldt noted.

Examples of persons eligible for COVID-19 testing include but are not limited to an individual who:

Returned to the workplace in phase one or phase two

Attended any of the recent protests across the state or any other large gathering

Is employed as a health care worker, first responder, or other essential worker who directly interacts with the public while working

Is currently under public health

quarantine

Is symptomatic or has a history of symptoms of COVID-19 (e.g. fever, cough, and/or trouble breathing)

Is pregnant

To schedule an appointment, call the Niagara County Nursing Division at 716-278-1900. For more information about COVID-19 or other test sites (including antibody testing), visit <https://www.niagaracounty.com/health/Services/Public-Health-Preparedness/2019-Nov-el-Coronavirus-COVID-19>.

Jastrzemski: More services opening

Niagara County Clerk Joseph A. Jastrzemski on Wednesday announced additional services provided by the county clerk's office would be reopening on Monday, June 29, including appointments for all DMV transactions at the Niagara Falls location, as well as appointments for the Veterans Service Agency and the Pistol Permit Office.

"This was our first week of reopening the DMVs and requiring appointments, and I want to thank the public for their patience as we implemented this new system," Jastrzemski said. "I know there was frustration about not allow-

ing transactions at our Niagara Falls location but, as our smallest physical office, it presented challenges in keeping social distance. Now, at the request of the four county legislators representing Niagara Falls and the mayor, we have reworked our plan and will be opening that office with limited appointments."

Jastrzemski said Niagara Falls DMV will begin servicing customers starting Monday, June 29, by appointment only - and appointments must be made online. Appointments will be on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, and limited in number in order to adhere

to social distancing guidelines. Residents can begin making appointments this Friday at <https://www.niagaracounty.com/Departments/Motor-Vehicles-Department>.

"In our initial plan, Niagara Falls was the sole location for Class D and M permit tests," Jastrzemski said. "Under this new plan, permit tests will now be offered at all three DMV locations by online appointment only."

Jastrzemski noted New York is now allowing road tests to be scheduled through the state website at [https://dmv.ny.gov/contact-us/road-test-sites-re-](https://dmv.ny.gov/contact-us/road-test-sites-re)

gion. Also, individuals looking to schedule their five-hour class should check directly with those providers who offer the class to see if they have reopened in accordance with state guidelines.

Beyond DMVs, Jastrzemski said both the Pistol Permit Office and the Veterans Service Agency are currently accepting appointments, while the Historians Office will remain closed at this time.

"We've had many people eager to apply for their pistol permit, so we are happy to announce that office is accepting appointments Monday through Friday," Jas-

trzemski said. "I would remind those making amendments to current permits that they can do so by mail."

Appointments can be made by calling 439-7122.

Regarding the Veterans Service Agency, Jastrzemski said, "I am proud of all the veterans we have been able to help access important services and benefits they have earned; so I am pleased to announce the Veterans Service Agency is now accepting appointments for any veteran who needs our assistance. Please call 438-4090 to schedule."

Food drive & Chiavetta's Chicken BBQ benefit at Cornerstone Community FCU

Cornerstone Community FCU, Cornerstone Arena and Mills Jewelers invite the community to come out for a canned food drive on Friday, June 26. Businesses and neighbors are asked to bring their canned goods to help sup-

port Niagara County food banks. The event will take place from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Cornerstone Community FCU main office, located at 6485 S. Transit Road, Lockport. Lockport Youth Hockey Association teams from Cor-

nerstone Arena will be on hand as volunteers for the day.

Several Niagara County businesses have donated food and prize items for the event, including thank you bags and gift cards. In addition, food drive cosponsor

Mills Jewelers will raffle off a pair of diamond earrings valued at \$500. One can enter to win with a donation of 20 canned goods, or \$20.

Chiavetta's Chicken BBQ will also be available, for \$10, from

11 a.m. to 4 p.m. (or sold out). Preorder dinners are available through a link on the Facebook event page, <https://forms.gle/tCM7yDQqagyfMjC18>.

NIAGARA COUNTY SERVICE DIRECTORY

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