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'New York Forward': Now that phase one is underway, what happens next?

'The mask works. ... Wear a mask'

As part of his daily press conference on Wednesday, Gov. Andrew Cuomo addressed the next step in his "New York Forward" reopening process. Regions began entering into phase one on May 15.

Cuomo said:

People ask all the time, "Well, now we are reopening, what is going to happen?" What's going to happen is what we make happen. There is no predestined course here. There is nothing that is preordained. What is going to happen is a consequence of our choices and a consequence of our action. It's that simple. If people are smart, and if people are responsible, and if the employers who are opening those businesses do it responsibly, if employees are responsible, if individuals are responsible, then you will see the infection rates stay low. If people get arrogant, if people get cocky, if people get casual, if people become undisciplined, you will see that infection rate go up. It is that simple.

This has always been about what we do. It has never been about what government mandated. Government cannot mandate behavior of people and it certainly cannot mandate behavior of 19 million people. It can give you the facts. It can give you the facts that lead to an inevitable conclusion. And New

Yorkers have been great about following the facts, but we're at another pivot point.

Yes, we're reopening. Yes, the numbers are down. Yes, we can increase activity and increase economic activity. What is the consequence of that? It depends on what we do.

Do your part; wear a mask. Now, wearing a mask, I have been trying to communicate in a whole different set of ways. ... But it seems like a simple thing, wearing a mask, and it's apparently so simple that people think it's of no consequence. It happens to be of tremendous consequence.

It is amazing how effective that mask actually is. Don't take my word for it, I am not a doctor, I am not a public health expert. Again, look at the facts. What shocks me to this day and I would have lost a lot of money on this bet. How do front-line workers have a lower infection rate than the general population? If I said to you, who

Now all information is good but, in a system that spends almost \$50,000,000 a year, I believe what is provided is inadequate to truly understand the cost of our school system. Since an educated student is the product of our system, budget and expenses should be evaluated similarly to how a business that makes products would look at their

is going to have a higher infection rate, nurses in an emergency room, doctors in an emergency room, or the general population, who has a higher infection rate, nurses in an emergency room, doctors in an emergency room, or the general population, who has a higher infection rate? I think most people would've said the nurses in the emergency room, the doctors in the emergency room, the hospital staff. They are going to have a higher infection rate because they are dealing with COVID-positive people all day long. Not true.

How do nurses and doctors have a lower infection rate than the general population? How do transit workers who are on the buses and subways all day long have a lower infection rate than the general population? How does the NYPD, police officers who show up who are dealing with people all day long, how do they have a lower infection rate? How does the NYPD have almost half the infection rate

of New York City? How can it be? They are the police officers.

They are wearing the mask. The mask works. Those surgical masks work and it's in the data. It's not that I'm saying it. It's in the data and it is otherwise inexplicable. ... Transit workers are lower. Health care workers are lower. The police department is lower. The fire department is lower, which also has the EMTs who show up first and help a person get into an ambulance. They have a lower infection rate. The DOC's workers are the correction officials, who are correction officers, who are in a prison. They are at 7%. State Police, 3%. They wear the masks.

Wear a mask. Remember all those pictures of people in China always wearing masks? "Oh, I wonder why they wear all those masks." They were right. The masks work. They are protective and they work.

Wear a mask.

Opinion

Wants additional information from Lewiston-Porter

June 9 is the date for this year's Lew-Port school budget vote but, because of the COVID-19 outbreak it will be done only by mail. In advance of the vote, we are to receive the proposed budget, which will outline planned expenditures in broad categories. Also shown will be last year's budget and a minimally detailed contingency budget.

Now all information is good but, in a system that spends almost \$50,000,000 a year, I believe what is provided is inadequate to truly understand the cost of our school system. Since an educated student is the product of our system, budget and expenses should be evaluated similarly to how a business that makes products would look at their

costs. At a minimum, the proposed budget should show enrollment numbers, be compared to actual expenditures for several previous years, and all items should also be shown on a per student basis. Doing this will allow the voters to understand the proposed budget versus actual expenditures, and to assess our system's productivity,

and cost trends.

Like any good business our school system wants to produce excellent products. However, taxpayers who own the system deserve to know what it costs to produce that excellence.

Jeff Manning
Lewiston

New York State

Jacobs introduces legislation to protect privacy rights in contact tracing

New York State Sen. Chris Jacobs has introduced legislation (S8327) to protect the privacy rights of New York residents as the state begins to engage in contact tracing efforts as a key part of its reopening strategy.

"As we emerge from this crisis and seek to get people's lives back to normal, protecting rights like privacy needs to be a top priority of state government," Jacobs said.

State and national public health

officials have been emphasizing the need for contact tracing to effectively monitor infected people as stay at home orders and restrictions imposed by New York's 'PAUSE' begin to loosen. Jacobs' camp said, "Unfortunately, methods for conducting the tracing as well as analysis of the data create significant opportunities for a person's privacy rights to be violated."

Jacobs' bill would require that any person traced must voluntarily

opt-in to the tracing program, and it provides that they can withdraw at any time, with the assurance their personal data is encrypted.

The legislation creates two new E felonies for unlawful dissemination of contact tracing information as well as unlawful use of a surveillance drone. It also establishes a cause of action enabling people to sue entities responsible for any violation of their right to privacy as it relates to contact tracing. Ag-

grieved individuals would be allowed to seek damages or declaratory or injunctive relief.

"Even the most ardent contact tracing advocates have acknowledged the concern over the potential of privacy rights being violated," Jacobs said. "The bill I have introduced makes the protection of our civil liberties a priority by putting some teeth into our laws that will hopefully act as a deterrent."

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PUBLISHER
Skip Mazenauer
GM/MANAGING EDITOR
Joshua Maloni
EDITOR IN CHIEF/SENTINEL EDITOR
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ACCOUNTING/OFFICE MANAGER
Halie Hernandez
CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS/REPORTERS
Kevin and Dawn Cobello, Mark Daul, Autumn Hall, Wayne Peters, Mark Williams Jr., David Yarger

©2020 Niagara Frontier Publications
1859 Whitehaven Road
Grand Island, N.Y. 14072

Phone (716) 773-7676
Fax (716) 773-7190

Editorial:

Tribune@wnypapers.com
Dispatch@wnypapers.com
Sentinel@wnypapers.com

Advertising:

NFPDesign@wnypapers.com
Classifieds:

NFPClassifieds@wnypapers.com

Circulation:

NFPCirculation@wnypapers.com

Legals:

legalnotice@wnypapers.com

Website:

wnypapers.com

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