

Poloncarz: 'We should not be the highest region in New York state'

Says people are not taking COVID-19 seriously

Speaking to the press Wednesday afternoon, Erie County Executive Mark Poloncarz said Western New York controls its own destiny – and will determine if Gov. Andrew Cuomo rolls back “New York Forward” reopening permissions – based on how its residents respond to the coronavirus.

The region has had the highest positive infection rate for the past two weeks, while Erie County, specifically, has daily had the second-highest number of new cases in the state – only trailing New York City.

Poloncarz said, in part, “One of the reasons, I believe, the state brought in the rapid testing ‘SWAT’ team, so to speak, was to get a better understanding of how many people really have positive cases here; and they are very worried – and I’m worried. And I’ve been saying this for quite some time now that, if we continue to grow, with regards to the case-loads, then we put ourselves at risk to seeing shutdown of things that just reopened – like gyms and bowling centers – nevertheless the shutdown of indoor dining and bars.

“If you don’t believe me. Look at what happened in Pennsylvania, when Pennsylvania’s numbers went very high. ... They actually shut down bars and indoor dining again, after reopening them, to stem the tide. And I do not want to see that happen here. It could happen.

“I know from the conversations I’ve had with other county leaders ... they’re very afraid of it, but they’re also seeing new cases in their communities. So, none of us want to see the state do the ultimate, which is saying, ‘You guys, you can’t control yourself, so we’re shutting you down.’

“That would devastate a lot of businesses that have already



Of the 88,981 test results reported to New York on Wednesday, 889 (0.99%) were positive. Each region’s percentage of positive test results reported over the past three days is as listed. (Information courtesy of the Office of Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo)

been severely hurt if they had to shut down indoor dining, or bars had to shut down again. I think a lot of them that are hanging by the edge, on the precipice, would probably close.

“And it’s a reality – it could happen. And if people think it can’t, just think about one year ago where you were today. You weren’t thinking about COVID-19. You weren’t thinking about the protests that we see in the country today. You’re probably thinking about the next

REGION	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
Capital Region	1.3%	0.5%	0.8%
Central New York	0.9%	0.7%	0.6%
Finger Lakes	0.4%	0.2%	0.9%
Long Island	1.0%	0.8%	1.1%
Mid-Hudson	0.8%	0.9%	1.2%
Mohawk Valley	1.9%	0.9%	1.0%
New York City	0.9%	0.7%	0.8%
North Country	0.3%	0.6%	1.2%
Southern Tier	0.7%	0.6%	1.7%
Western New York	1.6%	1.7%	1.8%

Bills game. But here we are today and these are the issues that we deal with.

“(People) like to talk about ... ‘When’s this gonna get back to normal?’ I don’t think there’s go-

ing to be a normal that we were used to two, three years ago; but we’re in a new normal today. And that means that, if things got bad again, yes, bars would probably be shut down and restaurants might

lose indoor dining – and that’s uncalled for. It’s not needed, because we can control this.

“We should not be the highest region in New York state. And the only reason we are is because people are not taking it seriously anymore. I believe there’s a percentage of the population, 25 to 30%, who basically said, ‘The heck with it.’ Some who believe it’s a hoax – it’s not a hoax. I know people who’ve lost parents. I know people who’ve lost grandparents. I know people who have lost siblings. I know people who’ve lost in-laws. It’s not a hoax. It’s real.

“And it’s not going away until we get a vaccine, as (Commissioner of Health) Dr. (Gale) Burstein noted, or we develop herd immunity. And herd immunity requires the vast majority of the population to have been contracted, and we know – based on the numbers from our antibody testing – that we’re only about 7% of the population has been exposed to the coronavirus. So, the vast majority of us ... I imagine has not come in contact with the coronavirus. And you’re still susceptible to COVID-19. And that goes for everyone else out there. And we need you to act appropriately. I do not want to see a shutdown.

“And if you want to go to a Bills game at Bills Stadium in October, we got to get our numbers down. And we only have ourselves to blame if we can’t do it.”

WNY ‘SWAT’ team results

On Thursday, Gov. Andrew Cuomo announced the results of the state’s “SWAT” team’s focused testing effort in Western New York over the past five days. A total of 6,385 tests were performed at eight sites with results delivered in 15 minutes. A total of 266 positive cases were identified, for a positivity rate of 4.1%. Contact tracing efforts in partnership with local health departments are ongoing.

- ✓ The results include:
- ✓ City of Buffalo: 5.9%
- ✓ Chautauqua County: 4.5%
- ✓ Niagara County: 2.8%
- ✓ Erie County, not including City of Buffalo: 2.3%

To ensure continued availability of rapid result testing over the next weeks throughout Western New York, Cuomo directed the State Department of Health to lend for use over the next weeks 20 rapid result testing machines to local health departments in this region, and provide each department with an initial allotment of test kits, enabling more than 8,500 additional rapid tests to be administered over the next weeks. The test results are delivered in 15 minutes, allowing contact tracing efforts to begin immediately.

The machines will be distributed on loan from NYS DOH as



follows to support continued focused testing efforts over the next several weeks:

- ✓ Cattaraugus: 750 tests, three rapid result testing machines
- ✓ Allegany: 500 tests, two rapid result testing machines
- ✓ Niagara: 2,250 tests, five rapid result testing machines
- ✓ Chautauqua: 1,000 tests, four rapid result testing machines
- ✓ Erie: 4,000 tests, six rapid result testing machines
- ✓ Cuomo reminded Western New York residents there are 86 existing testing sites currently operating in the region where COVID-19 testing can be scheduled. The sites are listed at <https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/find-test-site-near-you> and include:
 - ✓ Allegany: Eight testing sites
 - ✓ Cattaraugus: Five testing sites
 - ✓ Chautauqua: Seven testing sites
 - ✓ Erie: 51 testing sites
 - ✓ Niagara: 15 testing sites

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Backpack Concerns

As the old adage states, “As a tree is bent, so it grows”, this is true of our children too. An increasing number of them are beginning to complain of pain in the neck, back, shoulder and arms from the weight of their backpack. The top of the shoulder, where the straps of the backpack rest, has many nerves and blood vessels that serve the head, neck, arms, hands and back. An additional problem is the way some children carry their packs, slung over one shoulder. To complicate the matter, many are looking down at their phones for extended periods of time, adding undue stress to the upper back and neck.

Students should carry only 10% of their body weight in their backpacks, but typically carry up to 30-40%. As a result, a student’s growing and developing spine and body are susceptible to any or all of the following ailments: *strained muscles, worsened posture (forward head/rounded shoulders), neck spasms, tingling hands, headaches, dizziness, numbness in hands and arms, shoulder and lower back pain and aggravated curvature of the spine (scoliosis).*

Be alert to these warning signs that indicate your child needs to be checked by a chiropractor. Regular spinal checkups and the right backpack can mean the difference between a healthy spine or a lifelong battle with chronic pain and poor posture.

Rose Chiropractic, P.C. is a natural health care practice located at 435 Ridge St., Lewiston. Call 754-9039 for complementary spinal exam for your child (Valid until September 30, 2020).