

Town of Middlebury  
Emergency Management Bulletin  
September 18, 2020

**Spigot Opening**

Today the Governor announced that bar and counter seating is allowed in bars and restaurants, with the following proviso: there must be a Lexan (or similar) barrier between patrons and servers and patrons must have a separation of at least 6' along the bar/ counter. This is coincidental within the re-opening today of downtown. As Jim's message tells us, that's Main and Merchants Row are open as are 81 new parking spaces. And now you can belly up to the counter or bar to celebrate!

**Mask Defiance**

I guess this sort of thing is inevitable. A report from some retailers indicates that some people are refusing to mask-up when entering their business in spite of requests to do so. If you feel like doing that sort of thing, keep in mind you don't have a constitutional right to enter onto someone else's property in defiance of the rules they establish as a condition for entry. Most retailers have signs posted at the entrance requiring the covering of mouth and nose to enter and remain in their business. This is for the safety of their employees and customers. The Governor's order recommends it, as does our selectboard, and so does the retailer. Stubbornness is misplaced during this pandemic. If you refuse to comply with the request, you are subject to issuance of a no trespass order. Future entry into that business could result in a citation for unlawful trespass. Why go that route? To prove a point? If you need a mask, stop by the PD, we have free ones to give away.

**A Message From College President Laurie Patton**

President Patton has a message for the community. It will be printed in the Addison this week. Here's a link where you can read it in its entirety:

<https://addisonindependent.com/opeds/letter-editor-patton-college-students-are-back-community>.

**Numbers and Stats**

New COVID-19 deaths increased by nearly 17 percent **nationally** in the last week. In the last seven days, there was a 16.6 percent increase in new deaths compared to the previous week, according to the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Meanwhile, the number of new cases decreased slightly, down 0.7 percent when looking at the same period. Good news- no new deaths in Vermont in the past 51 days.

Vermont reported 44 new cases of COVID in the past week, but no new cases in Addison County. All is well so far in all the schools. Looking at the overall state stats it appears that we have in the range of 120-140 current active cases at this time. There are 2 hospitalizations in the state as of today.

Vermont retains the lowest positivity rate in the country.

## **Working to Reduce COVID-19 Stigma – A Message From VDH**

While the rate of virus in Vermont remains low, we continue to see additional cases of COVID-19. As the state carefully reopens, it's an important time to understand stigma, and how it has caused real, tangible harm to people's health and safety.

Let's start with a core fact: No single person or group of people are more likely than others to spread COVID-19.

This is key because stigma is associated with a lack of knowledge about how COVID-19 spreads, which fuels fears about disease and death, gossip that spreads rumors and false information, and a need to place blame.

Certain groups may be more likely to experience stigma and discrimination, but stigma hurts everyone by creating fear or anger toward ordinary people – instead of focusing on the disease that is causing the problem.

Some ways we can help reduce stigma:

- Maintain the privacy and confidentiality of people seeking healthcare and those who may be part of any contact investigation.
- Quickly communicate the risk, or lack of risk, from contact with products, people, and places.
- Correct negative language by sharing accurate information about how the virus spreads.
- Speak out against negative behaviors and statements, including those on social media.

COVID-19 does not respect borders or prejudices. When we focus on supporting and respecting people in our actions and deeds, we can protect one another and help end this pandemic.

Dr. Levine explains that this stigmatization has happened toward facilities and individuals in Vermont.

## **Forgotten Pandemic Heroes**

How about all those public health lab employees doing all these COVID tests, over 150,000 tests to date here in Vermont. They are working 7 days a week to get the results out within hours and up to a couple of days. Yeoman's work for sure, many aren't getting much time off. An example of professionalism and dedication when sorely needed. Oorah.