

Town of Middlebury
Emergency Management Bulletin
November 17, 2020

Governor Reinforced Reasons for New Orders

Following science and data, contact tracing has found that 71% of the latest COVID numbers were not caused by restaurant patronage, gym workouts, schools, and the like. They were caused by gatherings without masking or social distancing in social and recreational contexts in bars, social clubs, and gatherings after and during sports events. The largest increase in COVID infections occurred in Orange, Washington, and Chittenden Counties with tangential spread throughout other areas.

The Governor identified “wants” and “needs” in the context of the pandemic. We “want” to socially gather but we “need” to stem the rise in COVID. In terms of wants and needs, the governor’s orders suspend the wants in deference to the needs. The objective is clear and unequivocal.

Schools to Remain Open

As schools have not be a generator of COVID spread, and have been solid in enforcing COVID prevention rules, the Governor has said he has no intention of closing schools and reverting to on-line teaching.

Testing

Mobilization is underway to begin broad testing. The goal is to administer 5,000 tests a day, up to 35,000 every week. Middlebury will be one of the testing sites. More on that upcoming. We hope to get definitive information on how that will proceed for tomorrow’s bulletin.

Cases

2 new positives locally, Midd College students. Almost inevitable, but like the rest of the town, they’ve been for the most part toeing the line and following the rules. 95 new infections statewide overnight, mostly in, as we mentioned, Orange and Washington Counties. The Central Vermont outbreak continues to grow. Doesn’t take much.

Last Word for Today

Today the Governor assailed those who refuse to wear masks or comply with gathering rules based on “freedom” and “patriotism to be free from the hand of the tyrant.” He reminds us that patriotism requires self-sacrifice and sometimes hardship for the health and betterment of us all. Those volunteers who fought for our independence endured hardships that many of us will never know. Those 5200 Vermonters killed in the civil war certainly knew hardship. Comparatively speaking, COVID prevention rules are a walk in the park. Wear a mask, socially distance. Hardship?

TV shows have re-runs and so we can as well. With that we reprise a timeless item from our April 3rd bulletin is reprinted here:

An ‘updated’ edit of Thomas Paine’s “Crisis” from December 23, 1776, which is still relevant today:

These are the times that try everyone's souls. The summer soldier and sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from service to their community; but they that stands by it now, deserve the love and thanks of all. [consider the selfless sense of duty in following the Governor's orders for the health of the broader community; consider our health care workers on the 'front line']. Covid-19 is not easily conquered, yet we have this consolation with us, that the harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph. What we obtain too cheap, we esteem too lightly; it is dearness only that gives everything its value. Heaven knows how to put a price on its goods; and it would be strange indeed if so celestial an article as our community health should not be highly valued and rated..."

With that in mind stay focused on beating this thing, stay focused on staying healthy and keeping our community healthy. In the not too distant future we should all revel in the sacrifices we are making, pat each other on the back, shake hands and say " WE DID IT!".