



December 15, 2020.

Dear Mary,

Everything we have done from the start of this pandemic has been based on the facts, and the facts are that COVID cases, hospitalizations and deaths are all on the rise across the country. We are on an unsustainable trajectory and if we don't act now, hospitals could become overwhelmed in January.

Right now, New York is focused on growing hospital capacity through our Surge and Flex program and requiring hospital systems to begin working together so they are prepared. As those operations continue, it's on all of us to be smart, tough, and do what we know stops the spread—socially distance, wear masks and wash our hands. The goal is to avoid another shutdown and we will only be able to do that if we all do our part.



Photo of the Day: The Parrish Art Museum in Water Mill, NY, created a free outdoor art exhibit for public viewing (Photo by Jenny Gorman)

Here's what else you need to know tonight:

1. **Total COVID hospitalizations rose to 5,982.** Of the 194,188 tests reported yesterday, 10,353, or 5.33 percent, were positive. There were 1,065 patients in ICU yesterday, up 25 from the previous day. Of them, 580 are intubated. Sadly, we lost 128 New Yorkers to the virus.

2. **New York hospitals continue to receive and administer doses of the COVID vaccine.** Among them was Upstate University Hospital in Syracuse, NY, which [administered](#) doses that arrived today to the first members of its staff. The doses were administered to Upstate employees Kenzo Mukendi, Caprice Hibbler and Suzanne Buck, by Chief Nursing Officer Nancy Page.

3. **The Finger Lakes region, with 725 hospitalizations, has the [highest rate](#) of COVID hospitalization by**

population. Hospitalizations in the Finger Lakes represent 0.06 percent of the region's population. Western New York has 520 hospitalizations (0.04 percent of its population); Central New York has 350 hospitalizations (0.05 percent); Mohawk Valley has 192 hospitalizations (0.04 percent); Long Island has 972 hospitalizations (0.03 percent); the Mid-Hudson has 735 hospitalizations (0.03 percent); the Capital Region has 288 hospitalizations (0.03 percent); Southern Tier has 166 hospitalizations (0.03 percent); and New York City has 1,968 hospitalizations (0.02 percent). The North Country, with 56 hospitalizations (0.01 percent), has the lowest rate of hospitalizations due to COVID.

4. In the second round of the program, Nourish NY has so far spent \$3 million to help New Yorkers in need. Over 2.8 million pounds of raw milk has been turned into dairy products and distributed by food banks, along with 993,000 pounds of produce. Over 1.1 million households in need have received products sourced from New York farms. With food insecurity impacting millions of Americans, we encourage all those in need to [visit](#) a food bank or pantry.

Tonight's "Deep Breath Moment": A teenager became a hero when she rushed in to [save](#) her neighbor from a house fire on Long Island. When flames surrounded a home in Brentwood, New York, 16-year-old Star Grant noticed that one of the residents of the house was missing: 69-year-old Catarina, who lived on the ground floor of the home. Star rushed in and escorted Catarina out of the house unharmed.

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Ever Upward,

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo



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