



# Columbia County Board of Supervisors

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Wednesday, March 25, 2020

FROM: Columbia County Board of Supervisors Chairman Matt Murell

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

PLEASE SELF-QUARANTINE, CHAIRMAN URGES

Columbia County Board of Supervisors Chairman Matt Murell today urged people who migrate from New York City -- where cases of COVID-19 are exploding -- to Columbia County to self-quarantine for 14 days.

"We understand that people are coming here to escape the disease, but everyone should consider they are a carrier of the coronavirus," said Murell.

On a similar note, health officials have observed that people are congregating or stopping to chat in places like the grocery store and the post office. Again, everyone is asked to conduct their business and move along, as we need to respect the space of others.

Murell added that the county will issue a daily press release on the coronavirus situation every afternoon at 4. The releases can be found on the Columbia County website and the Facebook pages of the Board of Supervisors, Sheriff's Office, the Department of Health, and the Emergency Operations Center.

In regards to the county Department of Health using private residences for quarantine purposes, county Director of Emergency Management David W. Harrison, Jr., said Wednesday, "New York State has mandated that every county have buildings ready to house county residents who cannot, for whatever reason, quarantine at home. Columbia County has been actively searching for vacant homes or appropriate residential buildings that can be used for this purpose. By being proactive in this effort, Columbia County is making every effort to contain and stop the spread of Covid-19 to the best of our ability. It is important that county residents not panic and understand that this is for the betterment of everyone.

"There are currently two locations that have been leased by the county, one in the Town of Kinderhook and one in the Town of Austerlitz. The individuals staying at these locations may be people who must quarantine due to potential exposure of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, someone who has tested positive themselves for COVID-19 and it not required to be hospitalized or family members that need a place to stay due an immediate family member quarantining at home.

"Since social distancing and other common sense cleansing practices must be the norm during the COVID-19 emergency event, these places pose no threat to neighbors or other people living in the area. As long as social

distancing is practiced and there is no contact, there is no threat of contracting the virus from the people staying at these locations. We ask to remember that the people staying at these places are your fellow county residents, please respect their privacy.”

“We need to let facts drive our decisions,” said Jack Mabb, Director of the county’s Department of Health. “You have a better chance of catching the coronavirus walking by someone in a store than you do from someone in a house next door to you. These houses offer no danger to the adjacent community.”

As of Wednesday, Mabb said there were no new positive COVID-19 tests within the county to report. “This hasn’t changed simply because we have no test kits. The hospital had received some as of Tuesday night, but they are currently being restricted to medical and emergency response personnel, and those who arrive critically ill at the hospital. There are no hospitalizations from the virus at this time,” he said.

Mabb said that the statement by federal officials 10 or so days ago that everyone who wants a test will get a test “is not true at this time.” He added that the turnaround time on results can range from three to six days.

Harrison noted the following websites are helpful for those seeking knowledge on the coronavirus situation.

New Yorkers can now sign up for state coronavirus updates at <https://now.ny.gov/page/s/coronavirus-updates>.

Those with questions about COVID-19 can ask them at <https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/form/ask-us-a-question>

Information on the new COVID-19 paid sick leave law can be found at <https://www.governor.ny.gov/programs/paid-sick-leave-covid-19-impacted-new-yorkers>