

***The Saratoga County Department of Public Health Services held an informational session Tuesday***

As the lead agency addressing the emergency response to the coronavirus (COVID- 19) throughout Saratoga County, the Saratoga County Department of PublicHealth Services led an informational session on Tuesday night. The session allowed officials to provide community leaders, partners, and stakeholders with key information that they can disseminate to those they serve and interact with. Following a welcome to officials present by Catherine Duncan, BSN, MPH, Director, Saratoga County Public Health Services, Dr. Harry Miller of Four Seasons Pediatrics in Halfmoon, who is also one of Halfmoon’s pubic health officers, opened up with a presentation that he is also giving to the American Academy of Pediatrics on the preparedness collaboration among pediatric physicians as well to elaborate on the global impact of Covid-19. (Both Miller and Duncan’s presentations, including detailed, procedures and protocol are attached to this article online). As of the time of the meeting at 5 p.m., data available indicated that the number of confirmed cases of COVID- 19 in Saratoga County was two individuals and the number of individuals currently under mandatory quarantine, not including confirmed COVID-19 cases was five, and the number of individuals currently under precautionary quarantine was 46. Saratoga County Public Health is working with the NewYork State Department of Health to contain and mitigate the spread of COVID- 19 in Saratoga County. Residents who have been exposed are placed in mandatory quarantine for 14 days and are monitored daily for signs and symptoms of COVID- 19.

Duncan continued to present comprehensive information valuable to the officials present, stating that the Saratoga County Public Health Department is working with the New York State Department of Health to contain and mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in Saratoga County. “The majority of COVID- 19 cases globally are mild,” Duncan said. “There is an increased risk to those who are elderly and to travelers who are exposed to COVID-19 in endemic countries.” The endemic countries are China, Iran, Italy, South Korea, and Japan. Individuals who recently traveled to any of those countries should immediately contact the Department of Public Health for more instructions, stay in their homes and self-isolate. She reviewed that if anyone is showing signs or symptoms of COVID-19, they should contact their primary care physician, and call ahead before the appointment to alert their health care provider of their travel information. Symptoms of COVID-19 include: cough, fever, trouble breathing and pneumonia. Individuals at high risk at this time are the elderly, those with comorbidities, diabetes, high blood pressure and those who are immuno compromised. A panel of representatives from the Saratoga County Department of Public Health, Office of Emergency Services, fire and EMS services and other community health and emergency services officials joined Duncan and Miller on stage to address the questions of those present. The panel also included Commissioner, Office of Emergency Services Carl Zeilman, Mike McEvoy, EMS Coordinator, Office of Emergency Services, Deputy Commissioner, Office of Emergency Services Ed Tremblay, and Mary Jo La-Posta, Ph.D., MS, RN - Senior Vice President of Patient Care and Organizational Excellence and Chief Nursing Officer at Saratoga Hospital and Richard Falivena, DO, MPH - Vice President, Chief Medical and Physician Integration Officer, both of Saratoga Hospital. The department presented updates on COVID- 19 quarantines, ways to reduce risk, planning guidance for specific groups and presented a host of other tools and

resources to those community officials that were able to attend. Handouts were provided targeted to each group of officials, such as advisories on interim cleaning and disinfection guidance for primary and secondary schools for COVID-19, instructions on how to clean and disinfect the work place to help slow the spread of germs, and guidance to law enforcement professionals on what they need to know when encountering those identified as having the virus. Duncan reiterated that the information about COVID- 19 is rapidly changing, and that information and precautionary measures given to her department by the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) is revised daily. Residents, staff, and the general public can call the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) 24/7 Hotline at 1-888-364-3065, with any questions. An extensive list of links was reviewed and information is now available on the Saratoga County website, including pertinent details for health care providers, schools, employers, travel information, and additional resources. Saratoga Hospital has two COVID-19 testing sites that are open five days a week by appointment only, and a tent is set up outside the Emergency Department to address those presenting themselves for testing. Comments from Saratoga County public officials on the information and response to date in the County: Supervisor Preston Allen, Chairman of the Board of Supervisors: "This is an exhaustive process and our dedicated staff will leave no stone unturned." City of Saratoga Springs Supervisor Matthew Veitch: "It was a good event. It added some good information about what we should be doing in Saratoga County to limit or hopefully eliminate the spread of the coronavirus in our county. "The Saratoga County Public Health Department and Office of Emergency Services are doing a great job implementing our preparedness plan, and I think, going forward, we're going to make sure we continue to get the information we need as supervisors to communicate to our cities and towns about what's going on." City of Saratoga Springs Supervisor Tara Gaston: " I want people to listen closely to the information. Don't panic. Simple precautions help. Wash your hands using soap, soap, soap. Call the state hotline with any questions." Malta Supervisor Darren O'Connor: "The meeting was time very well spent. The officials in Saratoga County who organized the meeting have been working extremely hard as they go about the very difficult process of identifying those infected and exposed and isolating those who present a risk of transferring the virus. "The meeting was a great help in providing a coordinated response to the threat from health and hospital officials, emergency services, first responders, and county and town leaders, assuring that our response is effective and measured, but not reckless." Town of Halfmoon Supervisor, Kevin Tollisen: "The meeting was very pertinent and provided relevant information to our supervisors, town officials, law enforcement and first responders to ensure that we are doing everything we can for our communities. "Dr. Harry Miller is also making this presentation to area pediatricians who have joined together to develop protocol. We have a tremendous resource right here in him. "Here at the Town of Halfmoon, we are advancing prudent and reasonable cleaning measures. This is a virus; if we work together, we can contain and hopefully eliminate this. Cathy Duncan and her entire staff are working around the clock to help people." Burnt Hills- Ballston Lake Schools Director of Safety and Security Phil Poitier:" "Schools face different challenges today than years ago, and school leaders work closely with local and state law enforcement agencies for many reasons to ensure kids are in a safe environment in which to learn. "As such, we have plans in place to handle epidemics, such as COVID-19, and we take all the new information and challenges that the state and county health departments

share with us and adapt our practices and follow protocols and guidance so we can continue to do our job of keeping our kids safe in our schools.” While there is currently no vaccine to prevent the virus, the simple steps below can help stop the spread of this and other respiratory viruses. It was mentioned that a readily available solution with which to clean surface is one cup of bleach to five gallons of water:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available then use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.