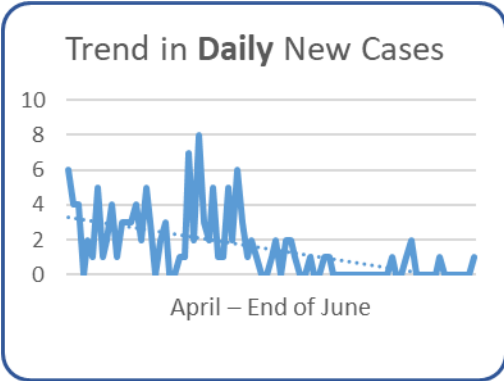




PUBLIC HEALTH UNIT: COVID-19 RESPONSE UPDATE



The month of June continued the steady trend of declining COVID-19 case rates since they peaked for Essex County in January 2021. In fact, this past month, the fewest number of COVID-19 cases were reported to ECHD since the pandemic began. This mirrors the overall trend throughout New York, leading the Governor to end the COVID-19 state disaster emergency on June 24. As quickly as we transitioned into pandemic restrictions on daily life, we are transitioning out of those restrictions and returning,

more and more, to pre-pandemic activities. Residents have been eager to get back to the things they enjoy – travel, spending time with family and friends, dining out, attending a variety of community and cultural events, to name a few.

At the health department, we are also transitioning. While we continue to direct significant energy and resources toward the COVID-19 vaccination effort, we are also dusting off our core public health program work plans, reviewing goals and objectives, and introducing new staff to the broader world of public health outside of COVID.

ISOLATION & QUARANTINE DATA

Essex County Data*	Total
All Cases/Isolation Orders (to date)	1,648
Current Cases/Isolation Orders	1
All Contacts/Quarantine Orders (to date)	7,424
Current Contacts/Quarantine Orders	4

*Query run 06.25.2021

COVID VACCINATION PROGRESS

Our Department continues collaboration with local healthcare providers to assess their vaccination plans and determine how best to ensure vaccine is available to all who want it in Essex County. Recently healthcare providers have increased their efforts which is helping to cover our residents.



In response to this increased availability and acceptance of vaccine at our community-based clinics, our Department is scaling back **mass** vaccination efforts. Monday clinics at our office will continue to be an opportunity, *Brewing Immunity in Our Community* with local breweries continues, and efforts to meet people at farmers' markets and community events are underway for July and August as shown in the schedule below.



Our Department remains a resource for vaccine for nursing homes and as needed, transfers vaccine over for administration of new patients in their care or staff working in their facilities.

Our Department continues our quality assurance efforts to ensure all electronic records are correct allowing residents to access the NYS Excelsior Pass as documentation of their vaccination status and use for access to certain facilities.

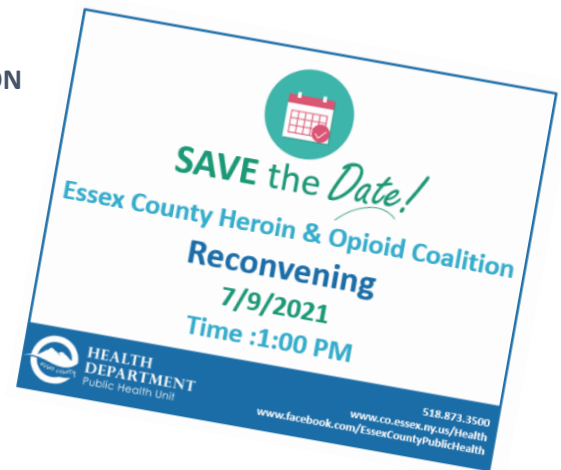
2021							JUL	
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa		
				1	2	3		
4	5	6	7	8	9	10	ECHD; Ausable Brewery	
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	ECHD; Willsboro Farmer's Market	
18	19	20	21	22	23	24	ECHD; Ledge Hill Brewery	
25	26	27	28	29	30	31	ECHD; Drive-In Movie at Essex Co Fairgrounds	
							AUG	
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
8	9	10	11	12	13	14	ECHD; Ti-Rabies Duo	
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	ECHD; Essex County Fair	
22	23	24	25	26	27	28	ECHD	
29	30	31					ECHD	

CORE PUBLIC HEALTH PROGRAMMING UPDATES

RABIES PREVENTION & CONTROL

ESSEX COUNTY HEROIN & OPIOID PREVENTION COALITION (ECHO)

The Essex County Heroin and Opioid (ECHO) coalition is planning to reconvene on July 9, after nearly a year long hiatus. The meeting will focus on data sharing and planning how to move forward in addressing the issues with drug addiction, and specifically opiate misuse, in the community.



A September 17 meeting is also planned.

PREPARING FOR FULL IN-PERSON LEARNING FOR ESSEX COUNTY STUDENTS

Our Department has been awarded \$1,028,947 to enable schools in our county to maintain in-person learning through a surveillance/screening testing initiative. Because of weekly meeting held with school superintendents throughout the 2020-2021 school year, our Department retains open lines of communication and planning for the best use of these funds. Several planning and information sharing meetings were held with other local health departments, BOES groups, labs and other potential partners to develop a proposed strategy. More information will come on this important initiative.

STAFFING UPDATE

The small but mighty Public Health Unit is working diligently to re-institute its state-mandated and grant-funded programs and services. The Unit has 8 regular staff and 1.5 staff funded fully to address COVID response. Because all staff are working within a new capacity or have been hired within the year the Unit is starting fresh in many ways this year. While rebuilding will take time, energy is up to get back to our core work of Promote-Prevent-Protect.

**Prevent
Diseases**

**Promote
Health**

**Protect
Health**

Governor Cuomo announced that effective June 24, 2021 the state's declaration of Covid 19 emergency is ending. Last week the state of NY also lifted most Covid 19 restrictions with the exception of health care. This was due to reaching a threshold of 70% of New Yorkers with at least one vaccine dose. The health care exception requires our home health staff to continue to wear masks while making home visits.

The health emergency went into effect on March 7, 2020 as part of the Governor's executive order. The order waived many health care regulations and relaxed many health care regulations. Here are the waivers:

- **Supervision:** Allows CHHAs through indirect means, including by telephone or video communication (April 10, 2020 DOH DAL, October 13, 2020 DOH DAL and Executive Order (E.O.) 202.5 extended through June 9, 2021). This minimized the visits to patient homes just for an aide supervision visit every 14 days or less.
- **Initial Health Assessments:** New employees may have health assessments completed by telehealth or by an RN but have not been waived (April 10, 2020 DOH DAL and October 14, 2020 DAL). This ensures all newly hired personnel receive a medical health assessment prior to assuming patient care/visit.
- **Annual Health Assessment:** All personnel are advised to obtain an annual health assessment by December 31, 2020 (Temporarily suspended (E.O. 202.1; April 10, 2020 DOH DAL; and April 8, 2020 DOH DAL for CDPAP personal assistants); suspension was lifted by October 14, 2020 DOH DAL); can be conducted via telehealth. We continued to perform an annual assessment of health on all employed and contract staff. TB testing was no longer required on an annual basis for staff that are asymptomatic.
- **Annual Performance Evaluations:** Temporarily suspended (April 10, 2020 DOH DAL); can be done by phone or telehealth. This allowed our supervisors to delay the staff annual in home visits and performance evaluations until after most received their Covid 19 vaccinations.
- **Telehealth:** Allows providers to utilize and receive reimbursement for telehealth, including telephonic assessment, monitoring and evaluation and management services. This applies to case openings, aide supervision, aide orientation, medication adherence, patient check-ins, assessments, reassessments, evaluations, RN and therapy services, etc. (Medicaid Updates (March 2020, March 23, 2020 and May 1, 2020) and FAQs (March 31, 2020 and May 1, 2020); October 13, 2020 DOH DAL; also E.O. 202.1 expanded the use of telehealth extended through June 9, 2021). This provided reimbursement for remote patient visits that were performed during the peak of Covid infections by Essex County CHHA clinicians.

The Home Care Association is urging the support from lawmakers to continue many regulatory changes beyond the emergency period. This will help ease the burden related to staffing shortages and fiscal impacts. The relief measures will help Essex County CHHA manage the ongoing after effects of Covid 19. We will keep you posted on the final rules and regulations.