



CHAUTAUQUA COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

PAUL M. WENDEL, JR.
County Executive

CHRISTINE SCHUYLER
Director of Health & Human Services
(Commissioner of Social Services/Public Health Director)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 24, 2020

Contact: Christine Schuyler (716) 753-4590
PJ Wendel (716) 420-1010

COVID-19 in Chautauqua County

Health Department monitoring outbreak at Fieldbrook Foods, Inc.

15 New Cases Reported from August 22-24

MAYVILLE, N.Y.: - Chautauqua County Executive PJ Wendel announced at a press conference today that the Public Health division of the county's Department of Health and Human Services is currently monitoring an increased number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 among employees at the Fieldbrook Foods Inc. plant located in Dunkirk, NY. Laboratory results received over the weekend confirmed 15 new COVID-19 cases in Chautauqua County. Of these new cases, 10 were associated with Fieldbrook Foods Inc.

To date, 30 positive cases have been associated with Fieldbrook Foods. Of those, 24 were workers and six were identified close contacts of the workers.

Of the 31 currently active COVID-19 cases in the County, 21 are associated with Fieldbrook Foods Inc. These individuals either work at the Dunkirk site, or are close contacts to workers. One additional case associated with this outbreak has recovered. The case investigations related to this outbreak are ongoing. Individuals who tested positive are placed under mandatory isolation orders and their identified close contacts are placed in mandatory quarantine by order of the Public Health Director.

"We received the first positive COVID-19 test result related to Fieldbrook Foods on August 16th," said Christine Schuyler, Public Health Director. "The initial case investigations found several confirmed cases associated with this employer, indicating the potential for a larger outbreak to occur. As such, we have been proactively working with New York State Department of Health and administration of Fieldbrook Foods to manage and control the spread of disease. The increased number of positive tests reported this weekend substantiated our concern about a potentially larger outbreak."

In collaboration with the New York State Department of Health, Chautauqua County Emergency Services, The Chautauqua Center, Al-Star, and Fredonia Fire, Chautauqua County Public Health staff will be conducting a COVID-19 testing clinic for the Fieldbrook Foods Inc. workforce. This partnership enables expedited testing and analysis for people who work at this site.

Along with New York State Agriculture and Markets, public health staff is working with Fieldbrook Foods' local management and Wells Enterprises, Inc. corporate offices to ensure all required and recommended policies and protocols are in place to protect consumers. Per Schuyler, Fieldbrook Foods Inc. has been very cooperative, appears to be following all necessary precautions, and has been in communication with their employees regarding the presence of COVID-19 among their workforce.

“My county team and I have also been in contact with local elected officials, school officials, and emergency responders to brief every one of the situation and ensure we are unified in our efforts to mitigate further spread, and provide information to the community,” said Wendel.

The County is proactively working with local leaders and officials to educate the community and emphasize community mitigation strategies to stop the spread of COVID-19.

All residents and visitors are reminded to please:

- Stay home if you feel ill;
- Wear a mask or covering over your nose and mouth when you can't maintain physical distancing of at least 6 feet;
- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water or use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol;
- Avoid large gatherings;
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces and objects;
- Avoid travel to states listed in the NYS Travel Advisory; if travel is unavoidable, quarantine for 14 days upon returning to Chautauqua County.

Chautauqua County Statistics:

- 31 active cases, continue to recover under orders of the Local Health Official per NYS Public Health Law including:
 - 15 new cases were reported from August 22-24 including a male and female young adult, a male and female in their 20s, two males and three females in their 30s, a male and two females in their 40s, a male and female in their 50s, and a male in his 70s;
- 130 cases under quarantine/isolation orders by the Public Health Director and being monitored. Not all of those being monitored are confirmed to have COVID-19 but have either shown symptoms, are awaiting results, or have risk factors;
- 414 persons under domestic traveler quarantine for having arrived to Chautauqua County from a state listed on the New York State travel advisory;
- 1 person hospitalized* in Chautauqua County as of 8/22/2020
*number of persons in Chautauqua County hospitals diagnosed with COVID-19, regardless of residency
- To date:
 - 261 recovered cases;
 - 9 deaths;
 - 301 total confirmed cases; and
 - 30,542 negative test results.

For more information about COVID-19 in Chautauqua County, visit <https://chqgov.com>. For general information about COVID-19, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>.

###