

January 3, 2022

Greetings District 7390 Club Presidents, President Elects, and Safety Committee Liaisons:

This communication is an update from our last communication in October as we enter the new year and deal with the current surge of the COVID-19 Omicron variant throughout the United States and within our District. Its purpose is to share the latest data on community transmission within our District and the newest CDC guidance on mitigating the risks of acquiring and transmitting COVID-19.

Community Transmission Status

All counties within our district have “high” community transmission rates of COVID-19 which continue to rise and are expected to peak in the coming weeks. As of 12/30/21 the positivity rate in PA was 24.5% and rates within the counties of our district range from 21 – 31%. (Source: <https://bit.ly/3FRvnFH>) In areas with substantial or high transmission rates (>5%), the CDC recommends that mask wearing occur for group gatherings indoors regardless of vaccination status. (Source: <https://bit.ly/3av6gdC>.) Hospitals in our district continue to be challenged by staffing shortages due to both COVID-19 and other illnesses. This week FEMA is deploying strike teams to support several PA hospitals and EMS agencies. One of those is in York County. (Source: <https://bit.ly/3eOsJ7C>)

Breakthrough cases continue to be on the rise even in individuals that have been vaccinated and received a booster shot. The good news is that in these individuals, symptoms are mild, and the risk of hospitalization is low.

Recommendations for Club Gatherings

As in previous communications, the following recommendations remain unchanged:

1. **Club Communications:** Clearly indicate on your club website and within club communications safety precautions you are advising your club members and guests to take part in. These should be approved by your club’s Board of Directors. This will avoid confusion and help build a trustful atmosphere that may even encourage more in-person attendance. That guidance should include recommendations for mask wearing, social distancing, and taking attendance so that contact tracing can occur in the event a member tests COVID-19 positive. Do you have meals at your meetings? Consider spaced seating and gathering in spacious settings. View the Rotary Club of Harrisburg’s Safety Measures noted at the bottom of their newsletter for a great example! <https://bit.ly/3aqX8qC>
2. **Virtual/ Hybrid Meetings:** To help ALL members feel included, streaming in-person meetings via Zoom is the most popular and easy way to enable access by members unable to attend for in-person meetings for a variety of reasons. A great article on how to conduct hybrid meetings can be found on the RI blog: <https://blog.rotary.org/2020/08/17/hybrid-meetings-keep-all-members-engaged/>
3. **Is it the flu or COVID-19?** Getting vaccinated for BOTH COVID-19 and the flu will give you the greatest protection against severe illness in the months again. To learn more about symptoms go to: <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/symptoms/flu-vs-covid19.htm> Getting both the COVID-19 and flu vaccines will help all of us personally and collectively get through the colder months as we gather indoors. The use of hand sanitizer gel and masks will minimize not only COVID-19



transmission but colds and flu as well. **Have a sore throat or the sniffles?** Stay home and participate in your club meeting virtually! **Tested positive for COVID-19 and were at a recent Rotary gathering?** Notify the club president so that club members can be notified to take precautions if necessary. **New CDC isolation guidelines** based on vaccination status were just released on 12/27/21 for the General Population:

<https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2021/s1227-isolation-quarantine-guidance.html>

Thank you for your attention and commitment to keeping yourselves, your clubs, and the public safe during the ongoing evolution of the COVID-19 pandemic. As with Polio, please advocate for vaccinations including Booster shots to not only keep individuals safe but our worldwide community!



Yours in Rotary,

DGE Juliet Altenburg RN on behalf of the District 7390 Safety Committee