

October 13, 2021

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

This communication comes to you complements of the District 7390 Safety Committee as we enter the holiday season and continue to navigate the course of the COVID-19 pandemic. Its purpose is to share the latest CDC guidance on mitigating the risks of COVID-19 based on the status of community transmission within the counties of District 7390.

Community Transmission Status

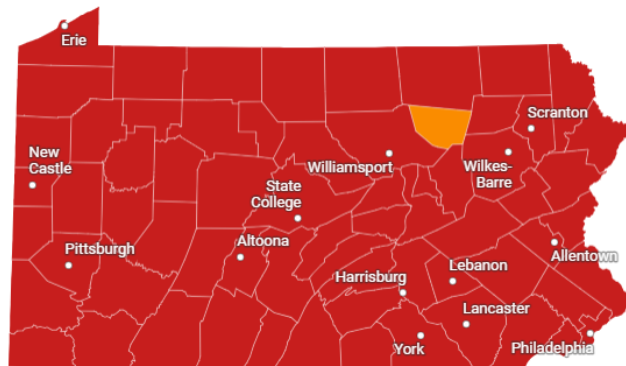
All counties within our district have “high” community transmission rates of COVID-19 meaning 10% or greater positivity rates in the last week. In areas with substantial or high transmission rates, the CDC recommends that mask wearing occur for group gatherings indoors regardless of vaccination status.

<https://bit.ly/3av6gdC>

Pa. COVID-19 transmission rates

The CDC recommends that people in counties with substantial or high rates of transmission wear masks indoors, regardless of vaccination status. High means 100 or more population-adjusted cases or 10% or greater test positivity in the last week.

Low Moderate Substantial High



Data as of Oct. 7, 2021. Case rate data for Sept. 30-Oct. 6; test positivity data for Sept. 28-Oct. 4. The CDC suppresses small values that could identify specific individuals.

Map: Sara K. Satullo | For lehighvalleylive.com • Source: CDC • Get the data • Created with Datawrapper

Of note is that breakthrough cases are on the rise. This is when a vaccinated person tests positive for COVID-19. This suggests to researchers potential waning immunity as more Pennsylvanians pass the six-month mark for their last shot. Risk of hospitalization and severe illness remains low in those vaccinated, but transmission can still occur particularly to those who are unvaccinated. There are no COVID-19 vaccines available yet for children less than age 12. Currently, the number of COVID-19 cases in children aged 5-18 is nine times higher than in 2020 and hospitalizations in this age group are on the rise. Those who received the Pfizer vaccine are now eligible for a booster shot if they fit certain criteria:

<https://bit.ly/3uYpn9F> Booster shots are readily available at your local pharmacy.

Recommendations for Club Gatherings

Most clubs are now engaging in activities including club meetings and service activities in person. Without a doubt it has been wonderful to reconnect with our Rotary friends and family. As we continue to navigate the ongoing nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Safety Committee has several

recommendations based on CDC guidance and best practices occurring in clubs throughout our District, that still enable in-person connection but place a high regard on Safety.

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. **Group gatherings:** Many clubs are in the process of planning holiday gatherings. Part of every holiday gathering is food. This year as you gather consider having your group gather in a larger space with more distant seating where food is catered and prepared with safe food handling practices. Meetup.com outlines ways to have fun and be safe in the months ahead: <https://bit.ly/3iDvRFX> Our District has its own meetup site: "Service above Self" where clubs can post volunteer and fundraising activities. Please join so you can post your own club's activities. <https://www.meetup.com/Service-Above-Self/>
4. **Is it the flu or COVID-19?** Researchers are warning that with the start of the cold and flu season it will be difficult to differentiate symptoms of cold/flu with COVID-19. 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? Stay home and participate in your club meeting virtually!

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 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