

Mayor's COVID-19 Community Task Force

Meeting Notes

January 8, 2021

What's On My Mind - (Mayor Steve Hagerty)

- The city will provide vaccine rollout updates as a part of our public communication campaign (i.e. how many doses on hand, who has been vaccinated, and which group is up next for treatment)
- The strike on the Capitol Building in Washington D.C. is upsetting to many. However, I am feeling very positive about 2021 and the new leadership at the Federal level.
- Excited about the signing of the Federal aid packet that will assist many people
- Small businesses in our economy should begin to see people spending money and utilizing services
- The vaccine rollout will continue to reflect updates as needed. According to federal public health officials there is currently a lag in getting details of the rollout into the system. We will continue to monitor this.
- Public Health officials are also worried about a post-holiday rise in the virus numbers
- Numbers for Evanston have shown a slight increase, but nothing major

Brief Prior Day's Situation Report (Mayor Steve Hagerty)

- The State remains in stage four (4) - the Revitalization Phase
- There have been eleven consecutive days of remaining under 12% for the positivity rate. Currently at 10%.
- There have been decreases for hospital admissions for the last ten days
- Medical beds remain below the acceptable threshold. Currently at 17%.
- The infection rate is slightly below 1.0%
- The seven day moving average is 18 cases
- The seven day positivity rate in Evanston is 3.80%
- Metric trends for the seven day moving average continues to become lower, steady between 20 to 30 cases. Currently at 18.
- Testing performed each month decreased in December. Currently 2,000 tests performed this month
- There has been an upward trend of cases in the age group ranging from 20 to 29 year olds
- Currently there are slightly more than 3,200 confirmed cases in Evanston
- New cases per 100K, Evanston is at 175K cases
- There are currently 96 Evanstonians who have suffered fatalities
- The long-term care facilities have 17 new staff cases and 14 resident cases

Meeting Spotlight: Vaccine Rollout Update (Greg Olsen, Public Health Manager)

- Mid to late December shipments of vaccines began to arrive to the City

- For the first two weeks the doses received were distributed to the local hospitals. Hospital healthcare workers are prioritized in phase 1A.
- The Evanston Health Department secured doses by the end of December, and began administering the vaccine to Evanston Fire Department paramedics on December 31. Seventy people were successfully vaccinated.
- On January 7, community healthcare workers (not affiliated with hospitals) were vaccinated. Administered 280 doses.
- There will be a POD scheduled for the week of January 11 for the non-hospital affiliated healthcare workers
- A survey was distributed to community healthcare workers at each registered healthcare facility to obtain an idea of employ population size and how many workers wanted the vaccine
- Currently working though the initial group of healthcare workers
- The state remains in phase 1A for distribution purposes
- The vaccine survey will be vital information for the health department to have to determine need assessment as events progress through the phases.
- Guidelines and restrictions for the various phases are being discussed at the state level
- Various demographics will determine frontline critical infrastructure workers
- Many people, both residence and non-residents working in Evanston are encouraged to complete the survey, to determine smooth transition to the next phase and clear communication on the status
- Each individual including children who want the vaccine should have a form completed
- Please share the survey with individuals. It can be found at surveymonkey.com/r/27LBXZK

Hospitals

- Northshore Evanston Hospital (**Doug Silverstein**)
 - At the peak of the surge the patient count was 155 before Thanksgiving. Today the count is 69 patients, with 13 patients in ICU, and 5 vented patients.
 - Currently have not seen results from the additional surge people were experiencing due to the holidays
 - Overall metrics continue to decrease. This allows the hospital to begin to open medical surgical beds.
 - The hospital has received the vaccine distribution doses and have vaccinated 9,200 staff members across multiple facilities
 - At the Swedish Hospital there were an additional 2,000 dose distributed
 - Have been able to perform outreach to the community to extend invitations to group members in the 1A frontline worker category such as dentist hygienists and EMTs
- Amita St. Francis (**Kenneth Jones**)
 - During the first surge peak, the hospital had 654 positive cases. During the second peak on November 15, the cases were 624 positive patients.
 - There are currently 377 positive cases among fourteen facilities

- At St. Francis there are 109 patients, 19 ICUs, 27 confirmed positive, 8 PUIs and 4 vented patients
- Continue to work through the vaccination process
- Open to perform education seminars to the community related to the vaccine
- Next year's MLK Jr. Day celebration will be held virtually on Jan 11 at 9 a.m. The State's Chief Medical Officer will be the guest speaker on the topic of Equity in medicine: [youtube.com/watch?v=M9GwJlkisIQ&authuser=0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M9GwJlkisIQ&authuser=0)

Senior Living (Mary Leary)

- Care communities expressed concern regarding when residents, employees, and independent living facilities will have access to the vaccine
- On the working group call, IDPH representatives mentioned they would address how certain communities are being treated within the same county and across the state
- The City's health department did confirmed independent living residents and employees would be included in the 1B category
- Providers discussed strategies for encouraging residents and staff to receive the vaccine
- Evanston's HHS department will conduct a Q&A session to address vaccine concerns

Private Non-Profit (Dave Davis)

- Many questions remain among the non-profit community regarding distribution of the vaccine to employees who work with many in the community, and how they are able to obtain access to the vaccine
- Will continue to work with the City's health department to determine eligibility within the various tier groups
- Will perform outreach regarding the vaccine survey
- The working group also discussed how to develop a public education campaign to clarify and address questions regarding the vaccine

Northwestern University (Luke Figora)

- Students are back for residential students effective January 4
- Classes will be remote for one week, and will begin in person after the MLK holiday
- Increased testing on campus and continuing to work on the necessary protocol for safety
- Northwestern has the ability to perform up to four to five thousand tests per day
- The overall positivity rate remains under 1%
- There are over three thousand undergraduate test result in, with only 9 confirmed cases
- Students are in quarantine isolation this week
- Working on staying aligned with the messaging regarding the vaccine and have distributed information as its received to staff members
- Will push to distribute and complete the vaccine survey as well

Education (Raphael Obafemi and Eric Witherspoon)

Raphael Obafemi

- Initially planning to return to classes on January 19, the timeline has been pushed back due to the rise in the infection rate
- Revised tentative planning will be over the next couple weeks for students to return
- Local healthcare officials are assisting school administrators to ensure proper protocol will be followed for a safe return for students and staff

Eric Witherspoon

- Winter break is complete
- Will not return for the month of January, however anticipating using the hybrid model for this semester
- Based on projections of post holiday surge, the month of January will provide an opportunity for administrators to have a handle on potential impact
- Offering a few campus areas to be a vaccination site for the community if needed

Legislators

Jan Schakowsky's Office (Ann Limpco)

Coronavirus Relief Bill

- The \$900 billion bill for pandemic relief passed in late December 2020.
- \$600 direct payments to most Americans. The bill provides \$600 in one-time direct payments to individuals and \$600 per child. The payments get phased out for individuals making more than \$75,000 or couples making \$150,000.
- \$300 a week in extra unemployment benefits through March
- Federal unemployment insurance benefits will be extended for 10 weeks through mid-March, with a \$300 supplement payment each week. Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation, which provided up to 13 additional weeks of jobless benefits to those who had exhausted their regular state benefits, was extended
- \$284 billion for the Paycheck Protection Program that helps small businesses
- The agreement includes over \$284 billion for first and second forgivable PPP loans, expanded PPP eligibility for nonprofits and local newspapers, TV and radio broadcasters, key modifications to PPP to serve the smallest businesses and struggling nonprofits and better assist independent restaurants. Includes \$15 billion in dedicated funding for live venues, independent movie theaters, and cultural institutions. The agreement includes \$20 billion for targeted EIDL Grants which are critical to many smaller businesses on Main St.
- \$82 billion for K-12 schools and universities
 - \$69 billion for vaccine development, testing and community health
 - \$25 billion in rental assistance
 - \$15 billion for performance venues
 - \$15 billion in aid for airlines
 - \$14 billion for public transit
 - \$13 billion for food-stamp benefits
 - \$13 billion in aid to farmers and ranchers
 - \$10 billion for childcare

IRS Update on Economic Impact Payments

- IRS and Treasury continue to work closely with our partners in the tax and financial industry to do everything possible to get the second round of Economic Impact Payments to the American people as quickly as possible
- At this point, over 100 million EIPs have been directly deposited into eligible recipients' accounts. Some recipients who used refund anticipation loans or similar products may have had their payment directed to the temporary bank account established when their 2019 tax return was filed. The IRS and tax industry partners are taking immediate steps to redirect stimulus payments to the correct account for those affected. The IRS anticipates many additional taxpayers will receive payments following this effort
- For those taxpayers who checked Get My Payment and received a response indicating a direct deposit was to be sent to an account they do not recognize, the IRS advises them to continue to monitor their bank accounts for deposits
- The IRS emphasizes that the information taxpayers see in the Get My Payment tool, including account numbers and potential deposit dates, may not display an accurate account number as we continue to work through updates. No action is necessary for taxpayers as this work continues; they do not need to call the IRS, their tax provider or their financial institution
- Additional information:
 - **Direct deposits.** For those who have not yet received direct deposits, they should continue to watch their bank accounts for a deposit in coming days. IRS tax industry partners are taking steps to redirect stimulus payments to the correct taxpayer account for as many people as possible. The IRS emphasizes that the information taxpayers see in the Get My Payment tool, including account numbers and potential deposit dates, may continue to display unfamiliar account numbers as the IRS continues to work through and update this issue. No action is necessary for taxpayers as this work continues; they do not need to call the IRS, their tax provider or their financial institution
 - **Mail.** Some people will receive their second Economic Impact Payment by mail, either as a paper check or in the form of a [debit card](#). For people in this group, the IRS urges people to carefully watch their mail for either of these during January. The prepaid debit card, called the Economic Impact Payment card, is sponsored by the Bureau of the Fiscal Service and is issued by Treasury's financial agent, MetaBank®, N.A. EIP Cards are being sent in a white envelope that prominently displays the U.S. Department of the Treasury seal. The EIP Card has the Visa name on the front of the Card and the issuing bank name, MetaBank®, N.A. on the back of the card. Each mailing will include instructions on how to securely activate and use the EIP Card. **More information, including images of the EIP Card and the envelope it arrives in, are in the attached [news release](#)**
 - **Tax returns.** While the IRS continues to closely work with our industry partners to quickly deliver more Economic Impact Payments, the IRS reminds eligible taxpayers who don't receive a payment – or the full amount– that they can claim the Recovery

Rebate Credit when they file their 2020 tax return. Taxpayers in this situation are urged to file electronically with direct deposit to ensure their tax refund – and their stimulus payment – reach them as soon as possible

- The IRS appreciates the patience of taxpayers as we work with our industry partners to complete delivery of payments as quickly as possible
- Additional information on Get My Payment
 - The IRS reassures taxpayers who do not recognize the bank account number displayed in the *Get My Payment* tool that deposits were not made to the wrong account; this is not an indicator of fraud. If you do not recognize the account number, it may be an issue related to how information is displayed in the tool tied to temporary accounts used for refund loans/banking products. The IRS is working to address this. People do not need to complete Form 14039, Identity Theft Affidavit, or contact the IRS.

Senator Laura Fine's Office (Senator Laura Fine)

- Testing site open in Glenview for local constituents by appointment only
- The office is adding additional hours for Sunday appointments
- For additional information please visit:
- [eventbrite.com/e/covid-19-testing-tickets-134676233239](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/covid-19-testing-tickets-134676233239) - sign-up link for Glenview COVID site

Robyn Gabel's Office (Christian Sorensen)

- Offices received an overwhelming response for legislative priorities regarding 2021 agenda
- Legislative process will begin on January 13th

Jennifer Gong-Gershowitz's Office (Kate Spears)

- Turn around time for Glenview test site results will be 24 to 48 hours

Commissioner Larry Sufferdin's Office (Adam Newman)

- No update

Business (Roger Sosa)

- Many Evanston establishments received positive responses to their Business Interruption Grants
- New PPP loans will be rolling out next week, and information will be distributed to local businesses to take advantage of that opportunity
- Applications begin on January 11
- The approval process will take a couple of days for review to monitor details more closely
- Will also coordinate a webinar to answer questions for business owners

Recovery (Kimberly Krull)

- Unified Command will receive the a draft of the recovery plan and will review the contents for discussion

Mental Health (Dr. Christine Somervil)

- January 12th will kick off the series of townhall meetings at the Evanston public library
- For more information, visit: link to the Mental Health Town Hall on January 12.
content.govdelivery.com/accounts/ILEVANSTON/bulletins/2b43c66

Faith-Based (Rabbi London)

- Praying for the nation in the midst of the current climate

Next Meeting: January 15, 2021 at 1:30 p.m.

EVICTION INFORMATION

Governor Pritzker has issued an Executive Order that says this protection is available to Illinois residents through 1/9/2021. To qualify for this protection, tenants must show:

- They expect to earn no more than \$99,000 in annual income for calendar year 2020 (or \$198,000 if filing taxes jointly) or had not been required to report any income in 2019 to the IRS or received a stimulus check from the CARES Act.
- They are unable to pay full rent or housing payment due to substantial loss of income, loss of hours or work, a lay-off, or extraordinary out of pocket medical expenses.
- They are using their best efforts to make timely partial payments.
- Eviction would likely make the tenant homeless or forced to live in close quarters with new people or a shared living setting.

Tenants who do not owe rent are not required to submit a declaration form to their landlords. Eviction enforcement can only be applied if a tenant has been found to “pose a direct threat to the health and safety of other tenants or an immediate and severe risk to property.”

MORTGAGE INFORMATION

If you have a federally-backed mortgage (FHFA, HUD, or VA loan), you have the right to request forbearance (meaning you can temporarily pause your mortgage payment). This relief can last for up to 180 days and can be extended for up to 180 days.

You must call your mortgage servicer to request this relief- it is not automatic. Your mortgage servicer is the company you pay each month for your mortgage. If you're not sure if you have a federally backed mortgage, your servicer will also be able to tell you.

- **If you need help, call now.** The deadline to request forbearance is:
 - FHFA forbearance must be requested by 1/31/2021.
 - HUD loan forbearance request has been extended to 2/28/2021.

IMPORTANT: When your forbearance period is over, you will still owe any missed payments. When you call your mortgage servicer, ask about repayment options.

If you have a federally-backed mortgage, you currently cannot be foreclosed upon, but be aware that this moratorium may be ending soon.

- FHFA foreclosure moratorium ends 1/31/2021.
- VA foreclosure moratorium ends 2/28/2021.
- HUD foreclosure moratorium ends 2/28/2021.

If you do not have a federally-backed mortgage, your home can be foreclosed upon and there is no guarantee of forbearance relief. Call your mortgage servicer to discuss any options they may have available.

Need help? Contact a HUD-approved housing counselor. www.hud.gov/states/illinois

STUDENT LOAN INFORMATION

Federal student loan borrower relief has been extended until 1/31/2021. This includes interest being waived on all loans, collections on defaulted loans is halted, and loan payments are suspended (all federal student loans have been put in forbearance). This is automatic- borrowers do not need to call.

IMPORTANT: When the forbearance period is over, you will need to pay back any missed payments. This will not need to be paid in one lump sum. Call your servicer today to discuss repayment options. You can also visit www.studentaid.gov/loan-simulator.

Private student loan borrowers need to contact their servicer to discuss if any relief is available.

Questions? Need further help? Call the Federal Student Loan Support Center at (800) 557-7394.