



Nantucket COVID-19 Update | Oct. 2, 2020

(Oct. 2, 2020) As of 5 p.m. yesterday, Nantucket Cottage Hospital reported 4 new cases of COVID-19 on Nantucket among patients tested at our drive-through evaluation site. That brings the total number of new cases on the island over the past week to 38, and the 7-day positive rate – which is the percentage of tests that are coming back positive – increased to 6.5 percent.

To underscore the seriousness of this situation, I will share with you that one of our inpatients who tested positive for COVID-19 was transferred by Medflight helicopter to a higher level of care due to the severity of the illness this person was experiencing. This is the third COVID-positive patient who has needed to be transferred by Medflight in the past week. We are wishing the best for all these patients and hope they will make a full recovery

We know that most cases of coronavirus are generally mild, but the virus can cause serious illness necessitating ICU-level care or even death in a small percentage of patients. Generally these are people who are older or have preexisting conditions, but COVID-19 can impact healthy people too, and we are just beginning to understand the potential for long-term health impacts of the disease.

This is why we urge everyone in the community to take this situation extremely seriously and recommit to the precautions that will limit the spread and keep our community safe. We know this is a social virus that requires people to be gathering and mingling in order to spread. Collectively, it is our behaviors that are driving this increase in cases on Nantucket.

So let's all remember the simple things that can help keep cases down: wash your hands, stay physically distant, refrain from large gatherings, and wear a mask when you go out in public. If a contact tracer calls you, please be respectful and cooperate fully with the case investigation. For those who have been exposed to someone who is positive, please respect and follow the requirement to isolate for 14 days.

Beyond the serious impacts to the health and wellness of our community, the latest surge of cases means that Nantucket will continue to be classified by the state as a “red” high-risk community well into October. This designation has significant consequences for the schools, for our children, as well as island businesses and the local economy.



We do not want a rollback of the restrictions on activity that were imposed in the spring, and we want to avoid a surge of patients that could threaten to overwhelm our hospital. Accomplishing these goals will require vigilance and the collective will of our community, but we know that we have done it before and we can do it again.

For those impacted by this surge of COVID cases, additional help is available from Nantucket Food, Fuel and Rental Assistance. You can find them online at AssistNantucket.org or by calling 508-901-1320.

If you are experiencing symptoms, please come to the hospital drive-through for an evaluation. If you are a close contact of someone who has a confirmed case of COVID-19 - and remember a close contact is considered being within six feet of an infected person for more than 15 minutes - please come to the hospital drive-through to be evaluated. For those without symptoms who are still interested in being tested, we have a program at the hospital to apply for a testing appointment, so we ask that you go to our web site and register for a test rather than just showing up at the drive-through.

Our hospital remains ready to care for your healthcare needs. We continue to implement strict protocols and safety measures within the hospital, with screening at every entrance and masks required for all patients, visitors and staff.

We would also like to see everyone on the island over the age of six-months come to NCH and get a flu shot, as it is more important than ever this year. Flu symptoms are so similar to COVID, and we need to avoid a simultaneous surge of both of these illnesses and preserve our resources as best as possible. The flu vaccine is safe and effective and I encourage you to get vaccinated.

We all know what we need to do to stay ahead of this. Remember to support each other, stay positive, and stay safe. Thank you.

Gary Shaw
President and CEO
Nantucket Cottage Hospital