



Report of February 10, 2021

As always, the #1 Health & Wellness Issue is the pandemic and what is being done to keep staff and students safe. While we are starting to see some progress, there is still a fairly equal mix of good news and bad news.

- **The “2nd Wave” of Covid** – the good news is that the positivity rate has started to stabilize and drop a bit after the “holiday season spike”. The bad news is that there are now other strains of Covid that are apparently considerably more transmissible than Covid-19. There is also speculation that there will be another spike in the positivity percentage, due to the large number of Super Bowl parties that were held this past Sunday. We should know for certain within the next week.
- **Adult Vaccinations** – the good news is that starting next week more categories of people (those with comorbidity) will be eligible to receive the vaccine. The bad news is there is a combination of a lack of a sufficient supply of the vaccine, along with a limited distribution system here on Long Island. School staff members who are trying to sign up to be vaccinated are finding that the earliest appointments that they can get are 4 to 6 weeks away. There is however some potentially good news on the vaccine front in that a third major drug company (Johnson & Johnson) is seeking emergency approval of a one shot only vaccine (in contrast to the Moderna and Pfizer vaccines that require two doses). Unfortunately, this vaccine may not be quite as effective as the ones currently being administered, but should still provide significant protection.
- **Children’s Vaccines** – the bad news is that there are currently no vaccinations available for those under 18 years old. The good news is that both Moderna and Pfizer are currently conducting trials on just such a vaccine. Unfortunately, it may still be several months before approvals are granted and distribution (which will probably take an additional few months) can begin.
- **Mental Health Issues** – at the Longwood Legislative Breakfast this past Saturday, statistics presented by Julie Lutz of Eastern Suffolk BOCES pretty much confirmed what has been reported in my previous Health & Wellness Reports. That school administrators are reporting an increased number of students suffering from anxiety, depression and behavioral issues, which they attribute to limited socialization with their friends and fellow students due to Covid restrictions. Another unfortunate side effect of the lack of “face to face” interaction (and more time spent on social media) are the increased reports of Cyberbullying. A bit of good news is that the State has allowed the resumption of “high risk” High School sports (such as basketball and wrestling) which should definitely help with the morale of our student athletes.
- **Legalization of Recreational Marijuana** – at the Longwood Legislative Breakfast, Suffolk Region PTA was able to ask our State Senators and Assembly members where they stood on this issue and I’m very pleased to report that all in attendance were staunchly opposed to legalization. However, they did caution us that despite their efforts to make this “stand alone legislation”, there is a serious concern that the Governor will try to include this as part of his budget package.

Should anyone have any questions regarding this month’s report, please don’t hesitate to contact me via email at: gerardbringmann@gmail.com

Respectfully submitted ... Gerry Bringmann

