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March 25, 2022



To All Staff:

PLEASE READ THE ENTIRE NEWSLETTER FOR IMPORTANT INFORMATION ON COVID. THIS IS THE PRIMARY MEANS OF COMMUNICATION ON THIS TOPIC.

Changes in the information below are highlighted in green.



NYS VACCINE AND BOOSTER REQUIREMENTS

Last week, the Public Health and Health Planning Council (PHHPC) adopted amendments to the health care personnel (HCP) COVID-19 vaccination mandate proposed by the Department of Health (DOH), including the removal of the booster mandate. Health Care Personnel (HCP) in covered health care settings (i.e., hospitals, nursing homes, adult care facilities (ACFs), home care agencies, hospice, etc.) are still required to be vaccinated against COVID-19. In addition, the amendments to the regulation clarify that new HCP who commence working with only their first dose in a two-dose vaccination series must receive the second dose within the recommended timeframe.

We have received clarification on whether the lifting of the State booster mandate affects the federal requirement for nursing homes to conduct routine screening tests of HCP who are not "up-to-date" with their vaccinations. The elimination of the State booster requirement does not affect the federal testing requirements imposed on nursing homes.

VACCINE\BOOSTER CLINICS

GSC still strongly urges all staff to receive the booster when they are eligible to protect themselves, our residents, our staff and the greater community.

Booster clinics, available to employees, will now be offered on a **monthly basis rather than weekly. The next clinics are scheduled for:**

GS Village Endwell: Monday 4/4/22 11:00am

GS Fairview Home: Monday 4/4/22 9:30am

GS Chase: Monday 4/4/22 1:30pm

The Medicine Shoppe has been extremely accommodating with providing the administration of COVID vaccines for GSC residents and staff. COVID clinics will still be available on a monthly basis, but we strongly encourage staff to sign up in advance for a clinic to avoid the Medicine Shoppe making unnecessary trips to our campuses. And if you sign up, you will be expected to report for your appointment, or to cancel with enough advance warning to allow us to notify the Medicine Shoppe.

GSFH\GSVE: Clinics are held monthly on Mondays. Staff will be required to sign-up for the vaccine by Friday in order for GSC to notify the Pharmacist he needs to come that following Monday. Please instruct staff to sign-up on the sheet located on the bulletin board outside of the HR Wellness RN's office. Managers may also email the HR Wellness RN the employees name and type of vaccination they wish to receive. If the Pharmacist is on site and an employee wishes to receive a vaccination without prior notification walk-ins will still be allowed.

Chase: Clinics are held monthly on Monday. Staff will be required to sign-up for the vaccine by Friday in order for GSC to notify the Pharmacist he needs to come that following Monday. Please instruct staff to sign-up on the sheet located by the executive secretary's desk. . Managers may also email the executive secretary, Jenn Carkuff, the employees name and type of vaccination they wish to receive. If the Pharmacist is on site and an employee wishes to receive a vaccination without prior notification walk-ins will still be allowed.

Vaccinations are also available at many local pharmacies; CVS, Walgreens, etc., by appointment. **And The Medicine Shoppe offers vaccines on most Fridays at its retail location at 1179 Vestal Ave Suite 1, Binghamton, NY 13903.** If you are interested in this option, please contact your HR Wellness RN to coordinate your visit.


Once you have received your booster, please provide your HR RN Wellness Nurse (DON @ Chase) with your updated COVID vaccination ID card.

Any questions please contact the HR RN Wellness Nurse, DON at Chase, Human Resources or your Supervisor.

GSC STATISTICS

as of 3/25/2022	GSFH	GSVE	Chase
Year To Date + residents			
SNF	1	0	17
ACF	2	5	n\
IL	0	0	n\
Year To Date + Staff			
SNF	22	8	22
ACF	12	14	n\
IL	n\	6	n\
Year To Date Deaths			
SNF	0	0	0
ACF	0	0	n\
IL	0	0	n\
Active Residents Cases (in-house or hospitalized)			
SNF	0	0	0
ACF	0	0	n\
IL	0	0	n\
Staff Furloughed			
SNF	1	0	0
ACF	0	1	n\
IL	n\	0	n\


COMMUNITY LEVELS FOR BROOME AND CHENANGO COUNTIES

 **COVID-19 County Check**
Find community levels and prevention steps by county.


Select a Location (all fields required)

New York Broome County

[< Start Over](#)

 **Medium**


In Broome County, New York, community level is Medium.

 **COVID-19 County Check**
Find community levels and prevention steps by county.

Select a Location (all fields required)

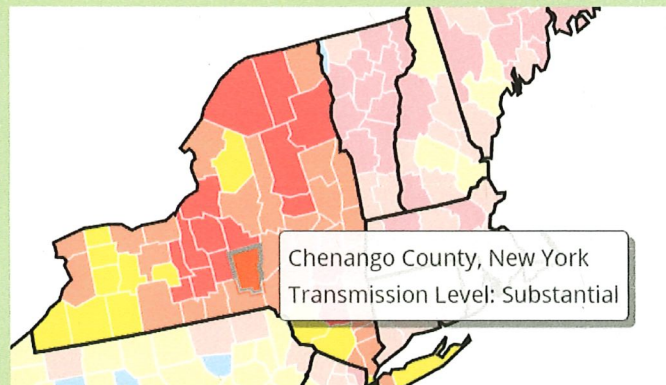
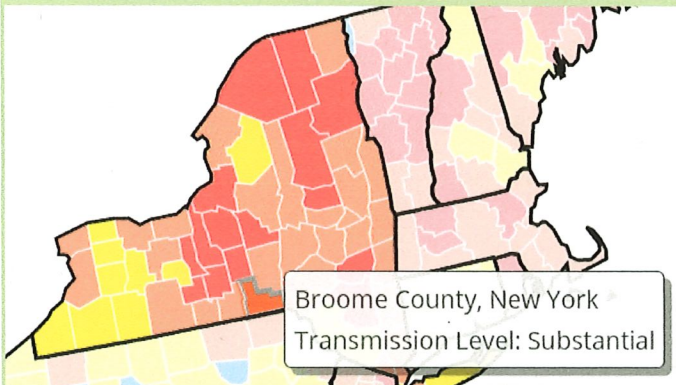
New York Chenango County

[< Start Over](#)

 **Low**

In Chenango County, New York, community level is Low.

TRANSMISSION RATES FOR BROOME AND CHENANGO COUNTIES



CMS ISSUED NEW GUIDANCE ON EMPLOYEE TESTING: STAFF NOT FULLY UP TO DATE INCLUDING UN-BOOSTED STAFF SUBJECT TO ROUTINE TESTING

In general, the testing guidance replaces the term “vaccinated” with “up-to-date with all recommended COVID-19 vaccine doses” and deletes the term “unvaccinated.” In addition, it updates the recommendations for testing individuals within 90 days after recovering from COVID-19. “Up-to-Date” means a person has received all recommended COVID-19 vaccines, including any booster dose(s) when eligible.

As a result of this updated guidance, staff who are fully vaccinated and eligible for a booster, *but are not boosted*, must be tested routinely based on the [community transmission rates in your facility’s county](#), along with those who are not fully vaccinated and those who are unvaccinated (i.e., exempt). In most counties, this is still twice weekly. Staff who are fully vaccinated and boosted and staff who have recovered in the prior 90 days do not need to be routinely tested for COVID-19. In general, the guidance provides that “testing is not necessary for asymptomatic people who have recovered from SARS-CoV-2 infection in the prior 90 days; however, if testing is performed on these people, an antigen test instead of a nucleic acid amplification test (NAAT) is recommended. This is because some people may remain NAAT positive but not be infectious during this period.”

Table 2: Routine Testing Intervals by County COVID-19 Level of Community Transmission

Level of COVID-19 Community Transmission	Minimum Testing Frequency of Staff <i>who are not up-to-date</i> ⁺
Low (blue)	Not recommended
Moderate (yellow)	Once a week*
Substantial (orange)	Twice a week*
High (red)	Twice a week*

⁺Staff *who are up-to-date* do not need to be routinely tested.

*This frequency presumes availability of Point of Care testing on-site at the nursing home or where off-site testing turnaround time is <48 hours.

Good Shepherd will be following this guidance, and will be testing employees are not up to date including those who have not received the booster with frequency based on the new guidance.

Broome County shows a substantial level of transmission, necessitating twice a week testing for staff not up to date with all eligible COVID vaccines.

Chenango County show a substantial level of transmission, necessitating once a week testing for staff not up to date with all eligible COVID vaccines.

NYS Mask Mandate

The Governor has lifted the mask mandate for businesses, but noted Counties, Cities and businesses can choose to continue to require masks. The mask requirement remains in effect for the following:

- **State regulated Health Care Settings**
- **State regulated Adult Care Facilities and Nursing Homes**
- Correctional Facilities
- Schools and Child Care Centers
- Homeless Shelters
- Domestic Violence Shelters
- Buses and bus stations, trains and train stations, subways and subway stations, and planes and airports

Given the Broome County statistics reported above, we are still concerned that the Community Transmission Level is at Substantial, and given our vulnerable population, we will continue to require masks for both staff and residents in Independent Living when in public areas other than when seated for drinks or a meal. We will re-evaluate this policy on a regular basis.

Patti Mackey
GSC COO

Dave Fawns
GSC VP of HR