

September 29, 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.

**#GET
VACCINATED
& BOOSTED**

WHEN NURSING HOME STAFF ARE VACCINATED
AND BOOSTED AGAINST COVID-19,
RESIDENTS ARE LESS LIKELY TO GET INFECTED
AND DIE FROM THE VIRUS.

BOOSTER SHOTS OFFER THE BEST PROTECTION AGAINST
NEW, MORE CONTAGIOUS COVID-19 VARIANTS.

#GETBOOSTED | @AHCANAL | GETVACCINATED.US

PCR TESTING AND INSURANCE CARDS

If you do a PCR COVID test through Good Shepherd, you should understand the following. Unlike the rapid tests we perform and review in-house, the PCR tests are sent to an outside lab for processing. It is important we have current insurance information on file for you so these tests can be billed to the insurance companies. For those employees covered by GS's insurance, we changed carriers 1/1/22 from UHC to CDPHP. You should have received new cards. If you are covered elsewhere, you may also have received new 2022 cards. Please bring your insurance information with you when you arrive for your PCR test.

PCR tests are conducted to confirm a rapid result if you are symptomatic.


GSC STATISTICS

| as of 9/28/22 | GSFH | GSVE | Chase |
|--|------|------|-------|
| Year To Date + residents | | | |
| SNF | 24 | 9 | 10 |
| ACF | 18 | 7 | n\a |
| IL | 1 | 44 | n\a |
| Year To Date + Staff | | | |
| SNF | 70 | 31 | 39 |
| ACF | 22 | 22 | n\a |
| IL | n\a | 18 | n\a |
| Year To Date Deaths | | | |
| SNF | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| ACF | 0 | 0 | n\a |
| IL | 0 | 0 | n\a |
| Active Residents Cases (in-house or hospitalized) | | | |
| SNF | 0 | 0 | 7 |
| ACF | 0 | 0 | n\a |
| IL | 0 | 0 | n\a |
| Staff Furloughed | | | |
| SNF | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| ACF | 0 | 0 | n\a |
| IL | n\a | 1 | n\a |

Broome County, New York

[State Health Department](#) 

COVID-19 Community Level

 Medium

Chenango County, New York

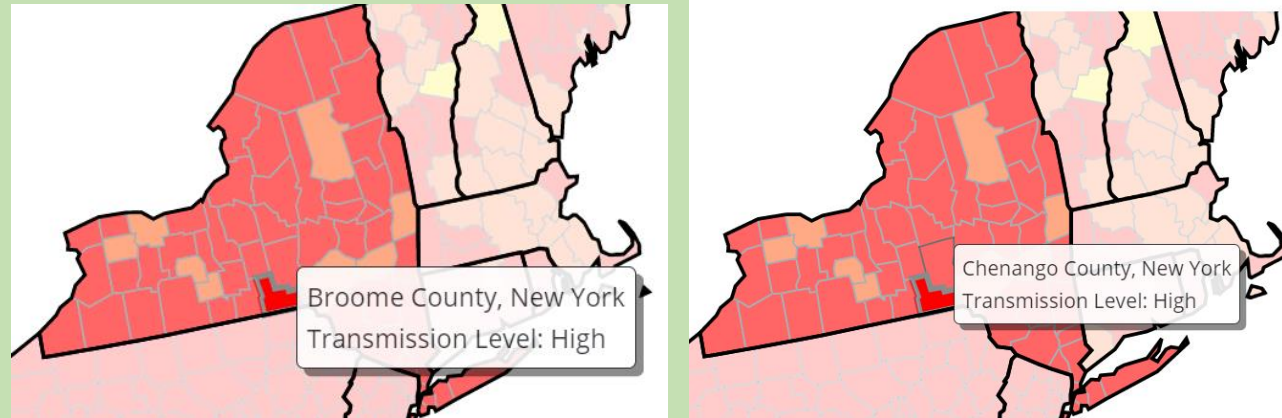
[State Health Department](#) 

COVID-19 Community Level

 Low

Masking recommendations are based on three factors — Covid hospitalizations, hospital capacity and new Covid cases — focusing more on preventing hospitals from getting overwhelmed and less on positive tests, which spiked during the omicron wave in December and January.

TRANSMISSION RATES FOR BROOME AND CHENANGO COUNTIES



CDC UPDATES COVID-19 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HEALTH CARE SETTINGS

On Sept. 23, 2022, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued updates to its COVID-19 infection prevention guidance for health care personnel and guidance for managing exposed and infected health care personnel. It also retired its nursing home-specific infection prevention guidance and incorporated guidance for nursing homes into the more general guidance. In addition, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) updated its nursing home visitation guidance, QSO 20-39-NH, and its testing guidance, QSO 20-38-NH, to align with the CDC guidance.

However NYS DOH has not updated their guidance to reflect these changes. When they do so, we will provide a more robust review of these changes.

CDC RECOMMENDS ADDITIONAL **BIVALENT** BOOSTER FOR CERTAIN INDIVIDUALS

Summary of recent changes (source CDC website last updated September 2, 2022):

New booster recommendation for people ages 12 years and older to receive 1 bivalent mRNA booster after completion of a monovalent primary series; it replaces all prior booster recommendations for this age group

At-a-Glance

COVID-19 Vaccination Schedule for Most People

(People who are NOT Moderately or Severely Immunocompromised)



People ages 6 months through 4 years

Moderna



-OR-

Pfizer-BioNTech



People ages 5 through 11 years

Moderna



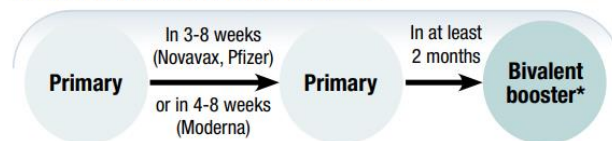
-OR-

Pfizer-BioNTech



People ages 12 years and older

Moderna, Novavax, or Pfizer-BioNTech



For more specific clinical guidance, see:

- [Pre-exposure prophylaxis](#)
- [Interim COVID-19 Immunization Schedule](#)
- [Interim Clinical Considerations for Use of COVID-19 Vaccines Currently Approved or Authorized in the United States](#)

People ages 18 years and older who previously received Janssen primary series dose†



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

CMS testing guidance references the term “up-to-date with all recommended COVID-19 vaccine doses.” Staff are considered up to date with COVID-19 vaccines when you have received all doses in the primary series and all boosters recommended for you, when eligible.

These requirements apply to SNFs only. IL and ACF\ALR staff are not covered by this requirement, and based on the recommendations from our Infection Control Preventionists, including them in the testing requirement would not increase the effectiveness of our Infection Control program. The vaccines and boosters better protect staff from infection, serious illness, hospitalization and death but is not an effective way to eliminate the risk of transmission to others if the staff member is infected with COVID-19. We will best protect our staff and residents if the focus and use of our resources are used for IC prevention and early detection of symptomatic staff. Routine testing of asymptomatic staff solely based on vaccination status is not an effective strategy for preventing COVID from entering our facilities.

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 SNF 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 **high** level of transmission, necessitating **twice a week** testing for SNF staff not up to date with all eligible COVID vaccines.

Chenango County show a **high** level of transmission, necessitating **twice a week** testing for SNF staff not up to date with all eligible COVID vaccines.

DOH Delays Enforcement of New "Up-to-Date" COVID-19 Booster Definition Until Oct. 16th

The Department of Health (DOH) has notified nursing homes and adult care facilities (ACFs) that facilities may continue to treat staff and residents who are eligible for a bivalent COVID-19 booster as up-to-date under the prior definition **through Oct. 15, 2022**. The change in the "up-to-date" definition affects quarantine requirements, work exclusion for health care personnel who are exposed to the virus, and routine screening testing of personnel in nursing homes.

Last week, DOH notified providers that it would not enforce the new definition of "up-to-date" in relation to various infection prevention measures through Oct. 15th. **After Oct. 15th, the new definition of "up-to-date" will be enforced in connection with routine testing, quarantine, and work exclusion as applicable.**

Providers should be aware of the following implications of the new up-to-date definition effective on Oct. 16th:

- In nursing homes, staff who are *not* "up-to-date" (under the new definition) with their COVID-19 vaccines remain subject to routine screening testing.
- In ACFs and nursing homes, health care personnel who are exposed to COVID-19 must be excluded from work if they are *not* up-to-date with their COVID-19 vaccines, unless the health care provider has activated contingency or crisis workforce capacity strategies.
- Health care personnel are not *required* to receive the bivalent booster in order to work in regulated health care settings. They are required to receive only the primary vaccination series (unless they have a medical exemption). However, if they have not received the recommended booster when eligible, they are subject to the additional requirements and restrictions set forth above.

VACCINES\BOOSTER CLINICS

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

Interested staff should complete and return a consent form today. And please remember to bring your vaccinations cards to the clinic.

NOTE TEMPORARY CHANGE TO TUESDAY.

GS Village Endwell: 10/4/22 3:30pm

The Medicine Shoppe will be here 10/4/22 3:30PM in the Great Room. Please sign-up on the sheet outside of the HR Wellness RN's office or send an email to bburnside@gsvillage.org and include which manufacturer type you wish to receive. Consents are hanging in a folder under the sign-up sheet. Please complete the consent and scan and send to Britnee or provide the hard copy to her, and if you have insurance please make sure you include the insurance information on the form.

GS Fairview Home: 10/4/22 2:00pm

The Medicine Shoppe will be here 10/4/22 @2:00pm. The consent forms are available outside the HR RN's office. Please complete and return it. If you have insurance please make sure you include the insurance information on the form.

GS Chase: 10/4/22 9:30am

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.

NYS Mask Mandate

On 9/7/22, Governor Hochul announced that masking will now be optional in multiple settings where they were previously required, including on public transportation, in for-hire vehicles, at airports, homeless shelters, correctional facilities, and detention centers. Masks will continue to be required at Skilled Nursing, Adult Care and health care facilities regulated by the state Department of Health, and in clinical settings regulated by the Office of Mental Health, Office of Addiction Services and Supports, and Office for People With Developmental Disabilities.

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

Thank you

Patti Mackey

Dave Fawns

GSC VP of HR