



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.



BOOSTER MANDATE FOR HEALTH CARE EMPLOYEES

NYS announced it will not enforce the booster mandate that went into effect 2/21/22 and that they will re-assess this in 3 months. However, **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.**

Johns Hopkins Medicine posts the following on their website:

Why do I need a booster, since the COVID-19 vaccines are effective?

The protection offered by the FDA-approved and authorized vaccines is very powerful, but it starts to weaken after two months for the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, and after five months for the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines. Getting a booster shot extends the protection, even against the delta and omicron variants.

Two studies released by the CDC ([one conducted April–December 2021](#) and the [other from August 2021–January 2022](#)) show that being fully vaccinated (getting both doses of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine or one Johnson & Johnson vaccine) plus receiving a booster provides greater protection from severe disease, hospitalization and death due to COVID-19 compared to only being fully vaccinated. A [third study, published in the Journal of the American Medical Association](#), shows similar results. The research also indicates that the booster offers greater protection against the delta and omicron variants than being fully vaccinated or not vaccinated at all.

The CDC recommends that people who are vaccinated get a booster dose when they are eligible, and that they stay up to date with COVID-19 vaccinations.

Booster clinics, available to employees, are scheduled for:

GS Village Endwell: Monday 3/14/22 11am

GS Fairview Home: Monday 3/14/22 9:30am

GS Chase: TBD

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 as needed, 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 weekly 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.

Booster Vaccinations are also available at many local pharmacies; CVS, Walgreens, etc., by appointment.

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.

CMS ISSUES 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. Both Broome and Chenango Counties show a substantial level of transmission, necessitating twice a week testing for un-boosted staff.

To all our un-boosted staff- this is another compelling reason to get boosted and avoid this requirement.

GSC STATISTICS

as of 3/10/2022	GSFH	GSVE	Chase
Year To Date + residents			
SNF	1	0	17
ACF	2	5	n\ a
IL	0	0	n\ a
Year To Date + Staff			
SNF	21	8	22
ACF	12	13	n\ a
IL	n\ a	6	n\ a
Year To Date Deaths			
SNF	0	0	1
ACF	0	0	n\ a
IL	0	0	n\ a
Active Residents Cases (in-house or hospitalized)			
SNF	0	0	0
ACF	0	0	n\ a
IL	0	0	n\ a
Staff Furloughed			
SNF	0	0	0
ACF	0	0	n\ a
IL	n\ a	0	n\ a

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

Go

[< Start Over](#)

Medium

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

- If you are [at high risk for severe illness](#), talk to your healthcare provider about whether you need to wear a mask and take other precautions
- Stay [up to date](#) with COVID-19 vaccines
- [Get tested](#) if you have symptoms



COVID-19 County Check

Find community levels and prevention steps by county.

Select a Location (all fields required)

New York

Chenango County

Go

[< Start Over](#)

Low

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

- Stay [up to date](#) with COVID-19 vaccines
- [Get tested](#) if you have symptoms

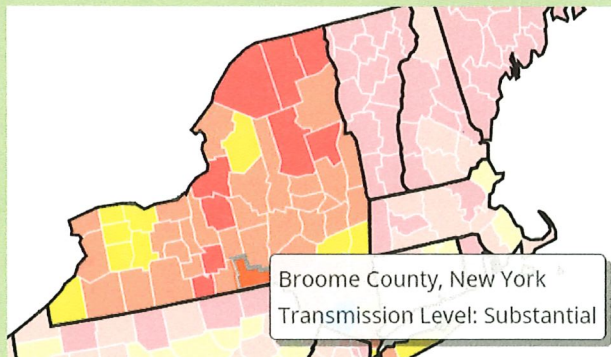
7 DAY METRICS FOR BROOME AND CHENANGO COUNTIES

Broome County, New York

[State Health Department](#)

7-day Metrics | [7-day Percent Change](#)

Cases	176
Case Rate per 100k	92.39
% Positivity	3.66%
Deaths	<10
% of population ≥ 5 years of age fully vaccinated	66.7%
New admissions of confirmed COVID-19 among county residents (estimated)	33

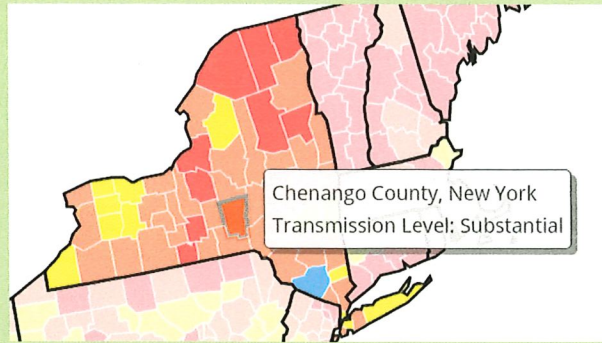


Chenango County, New York

[State Health Department](#) 

7-day Metrics | [7-day Percent Change](#)

Cases	35
Case Rate per 100k	74.14
% Positivity	4.22%
Deaths	<10
% of population ≥ 5 years of age fully vaccinated	64.1%
New admissions of confirmed COVID-19 among county residents (estimated)	1



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 the Community Level is at Medium, 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