



First Selectman's COVID-19 Update

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

We know the case numbers are high and many on the shoreline are struggling. A vaccine will be made available in the coming months. Taking precautions to protect ourselves and others will result in lives saved. Please consider those around you and wear a mask, keep your distance, wash hands frequently, avoid social gatherings, and [get a free COVID test in Old Saybrook or Madison from 8:30-4, 7days/week.](#) If you are not feeling well, stay home. Staying vigilant during this home stretch will get us all to the finish line safely.

If you are able, please consider making a donation to a local food bank, order a meal from a local restaurant, and support our local retail shops. I encourage you to check in on your neighbor, volunteer for [Step Up CT](#), and remember to check in on your own mental health. Spend some time outside if the weather permits, watch a sunset, take a drive through Ivoryton Village to see the beautiful Illuminations holiday display, or a ride through Essex and Centerbrook Villages to see the many uplifting decorations.

The Town Hall will continue to be open to the public with safety procedures in place. Masks are required. Please be patient and respectful while we keep residents and staff safe. Many department services can be done online, by phone, fax, or email. Tax payments should be mailed or paid online at www.essexct.gov under Online Services.

Stay safe and be well!

Norm

From the Essex Health Director

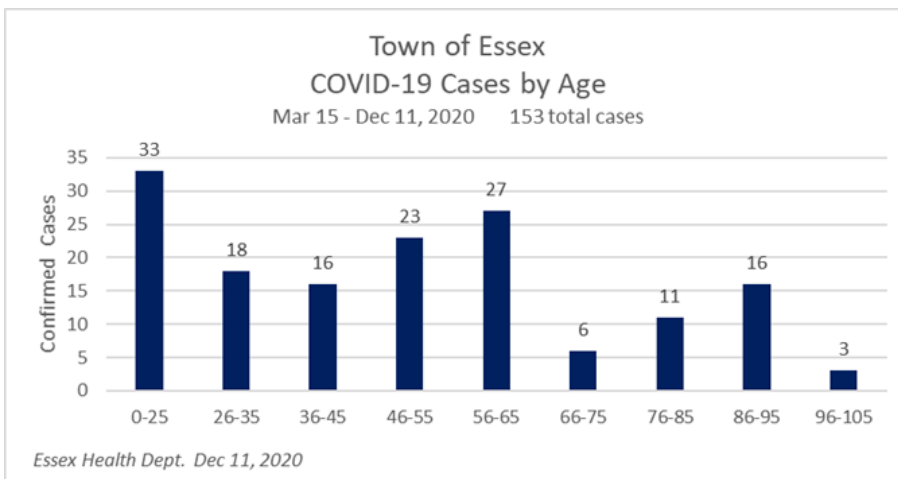
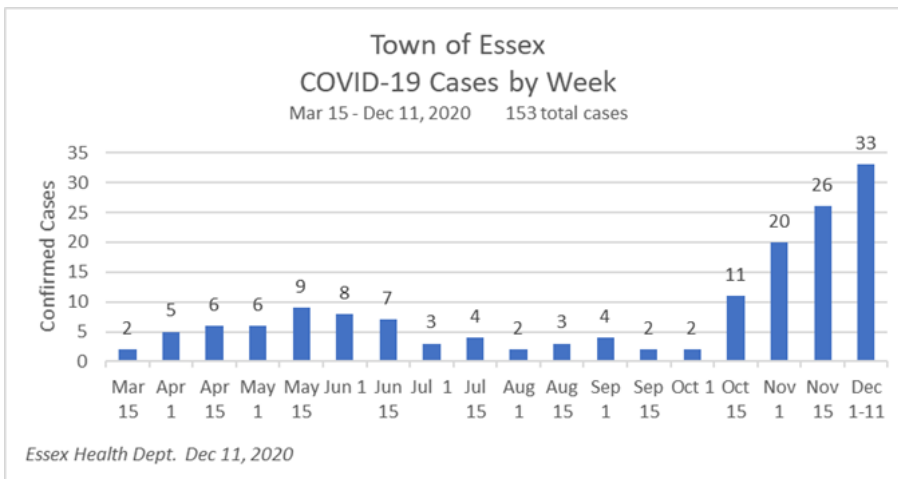
Essex continues to experience a spike in cases of COVID-19. As of today,

Essex has greater than 36 cases per 100,000 population. In October we were at 6 cases per 100,000. This spike is attributed to community, workplace, household transmission and social gatherings over the Thanksgiving Holiday. As of Dec. 11, 2020 there have been 153 cases of COVID-19 in Essex since the start of the pandemic and half of those have occurred since November 1. Hospitalization and severity of illness due to COVID-19 is becoming more common in 50-80 year olds in our community, too. Each of us must continue do our part to reduce the transmission of virus to others in our small community and within our households. Wear your mask (appropriately), eliminate non-essential social gatherings, wash your hands, and get tested if you have symptoms consistent with COVID-19. Remember, you can't get the virus if you're not exposed to the virus.

If you test positive for COVID-19, please call the Essex Health Dept as soon as possible for guidance. The Regional School District also requests that you notify your child's school if the student or a household member tests positive.

Stay safe and wear your mask.

Lisa Fasulo, Essex Health Director



From the Emergency Management Director

On Dec 10, 2020 the Federal Food & Drug Administration (FDA) granted Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) for the 1st vaccine against COVID-19. The first doses in Phase 1a of the National Distribution Plan will go to healthcare personnel, EMS/EMTs/Police who respond to medical 911 calls, and residents of long-term care facilities. As additional vaccine becomes available in January-February, it will be offered to segments of the critical workforce. Widespread availability to the general population is anticipated by Summer 2021. Now is *not* the time to let your guard down or give in to COVID-19 fatigue. Now is the time to ramp up your protective actions to reduce viral transmission. Wear your mask (appropriately), eliminate non-essential social gatherings, wash your hands, and get tested if you have symptoms consistent with COVID-19. Remember, you can't get the virus if you're not exposed to the virus.

This pandemic is not like a short duration severe weather event where visible damage is repaired quickly, power is restored within a week, or a shelter is open for your safety and protection. This pandemic is a long slow battle that we are enduring together. Job loss, isolation from family and friends, and illness due to COVID-19 are taking a toll. Although the physical, emotional, mental, behavioral, and financial distress the pandemic is putting on families may not be readily visible, it is definitely occurring in every neighborhood and in every business in Town. If you are able, please call to check in with your neighbor, friend, family and others in your circle to ask how they are doing and offer assistance. If you have a sense the family needs professional support or assistance, please speak up and report your concern to the Essex Social Services Director, Emergency Management Director, Tri-Town Youth Services, UnitedWay 211 or if its an emergency, call 911.

These next few months will be especially difficult for many in our community so please be kind, be considerate, and be thoughtful about your actions.

Stay safe

Lisa Fasulo, EMD

All Town of Essex Board and Commission Meetings are available to attend virtually via Zoom online conferencing. Please check the calendar on the homepage essexct.gov. for details. Virtual meetings are open to the public and you are invited and encouraged to attend.

Additional SNAP benefits coming December 16 to 112,000 households in Connecticut [Click Here](#)

TAX TIME



A Message from the Tax Collector

Please mail your tax payment or pay online.

Community transmission of COVID-19 continues to rise sharply in Essex and across Connecticut. Now, more than ever, we all must be more diligent. With taxes due in January 2021 we strongly encourage mailing in your tax payment. If you want us to send you a receipt, please enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope along with your payment. You can also pay your taxes online: [Pay Taxes Online](#)

Insurance Commissioner reminds that all insureds are eligible for no-cost COVID-19 vaccines

Connecticut Insurance Department Commissioner Andrew N. Mais reminds insureds that there should be no out-of-pocket costs for COVID-19 vaccines for all Affordable Care Act (ACA) compliant fully insured plans and all self-funded plans.

“Along with all fully insured plans, employer-based plan sponsors must remove all cost sharing for COVID-19 vaccines for their workers and their families, and anyone without insurance is also eligible for no-cost COVID-19 vaccines,” said Commissioner Mais. “I urge all grandfathered and non-ACA compliant health insurance plans to follow suit and remove financial barriers to COVID-19 vaccines for individuals, workers, and their families.”

The Connecticut Insurance Department [issued a notice](#) to all health carriers regarding the guidelines. For more information, [read the press release issued today by the Connecticut Insurance Department](#).

Step Up - Volunteers Needed

Step Up Connecticut is the effort to enlist everyone who is healthy, and able to help to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. Volunteers and flexible staff are a critical part of how we can ensure that our residents have access to what they need. Connecticut residents can step up to become substitute teachers, volunteer at testing sites, work in a variety of roles in nursing homes or hospitals, distribute food to those who need to stay home - and more.

[Step Up CT](#)

Shoreline Soup Kitchen Fundraiser

Covid-19 prevented an annual fund-raising concert at the Katherine Hepburn Cultural Arts Center for the [Shoreline Soup Kitchen & Pantries](#). In place of the live, in-person concert, a virtual concert was assembled and recorded at the

Meeting House in Chester. [Click here](#) to enjoy the concert!

Please consider making a donation to the Shoreline Soup Kitchen & Pantries at <https://DonateNow.NetworkForGood.org/SSKP> and select the designation "Gowrie Challenge".

Every dollar goes straight to the Shoreline Soup Kitchen & Pantries – and – every dollar is matched by the Gowrie Group dollar for dollar (through December 31st). Please help make a difference and consider making a donation to the Shoreline Soup Kitchen or any other local charity.

9 Town Transit provides free rides for COVID testing

The Estuary Transit District's FREE COVID Testing Transportation provides accessible transportation within the 9 Town Transit service area and is available 7 days per week. The service is available to all residents within the Estuary Transit District. Participant's taxi rides to designated COVID Testing sites within the Estuary Transit District are paid 100%.

Trips must be booked at least one day in advance by calling Curtin Transportation at 860-443-1655 9am-1:30pm M-F.

[Click Here](#) for more information.

[CT Covid-19 Cases by Town](#)

[COVID-19 Testing Sites](#)

[Connecticut Travel Advisory](#)

[Connecticut COVID-19 Data Tracker](#)

[EES - Frequently Asked Questions pdf](#) ([google docs direct link](#))

For info on COVID-19 call 2-1-1

Please continue to wear your mask, keep a minimum of 6ft social distance, wash your hands, and stay home if you feel unwell. We will get through this together.

Sign up for Essex News

Encourage your friends and neighbors to receive this newsletter.

[Click Here](#) to subscribe.

Sign up for Safer Essex Emergency Alerts

Receive alerts about critical community information directly to your cell phone or email. Go to www.essexct.gov and search "Safer Essex" or call 860-760-4340 x112.

Sign up for Weekly Check-In Call

Residents age 62+ are encouraged to sign up for a weekly check-in call from a volunteer. Please call Essex Social Services Department at 860-767-4340 x 201.

Have Questions?

Give us a call.
860-767-4340 x145

