



**CHESPROCOTT HEALTH DISTRICT**  
**1247 HIGHLAND AVENUE • CHESHIRE, CONNECTICUT 06410**  
**PHONE (203) 272-2761 • FAX (203) 250-9412 • [www.chesprocott.org](http://www.chesprocott.org)**  
**Maura A. Esposito RS, MPH Director of Health**

Immediate Release  
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### **Chesprocott Health District COVID-19 Update**

We are entering our ninth month of monitoring COVID-19 and it's now officially Fall in Connecticut. Chesprocott Health District (CHD) residents have adapted to wearing masks in public, adhering to social distancing, and limiting their gatherings. It is through these mitigation strategies that we have been able to slow down the spread of the virus in the community.

CHD will continue to focus on prevention methods throughout the year. However, we want to provide a glimpse into the daily operations of the office. Many staff members have been working 24/7 since March. Their work includes daily conversations with licensed establishments, nursing homes, schools, concerned citizens, community organizations, and local sports and activity coordinators. Each day, staff is managing positive case scenarios, lab reports and covid-19 related issues. We currently have less than ten staff members to protect the public which exceeds over 55,000 residents.

#### **DAILY OPERATIONS**

The Director of Health, Maura Esposito, oversees all functions of the pandemic. Maura is the liaison to every sector in the community which includes daily conversations with town officials, school leaders, coaches, hospitals, doctors, long term care facilities and many more. Maura has reviewed many school and community building plans to re-open and reviews all community organization event plans. She assists the staff in their work as well as providing personal protective equipment to those in need.

Our Environmental Health Division communicates daily with our licensed food service establishments, salons, daycares, and other local businesses. These facilities operate under extremely complex state guidelines. The staff provide frequent updates, interpretation, and guidance on how to operate safely during the pandemic. They respond to COVID-19 related complaints, conduct routine inspections, and offer assistance to businesses for compliance.

The Community Health Division conducts contact tracing 24/7. This involves daily check-ins with all cases and contacts. Staff also works with schools and nursing homes to assist prevention and management of the spread of COVID-19. A school data monitoring system was developed to track upticks in school absences. Media campaigns to educate the public were developed as well.

All CHD staff continues to work closely with our partners at the State Department of Public Health (DPH) to adhere to public health recommendations.

In total for 2020, we have had 253 cases in Cheshire, 88 cases in Prospect and 152 in Wolcott. Furthermore, 66 of those cases were regulated community cases such as group homes and nursing homes. We also lost 33 residents to the virus. Presently we are monitoring 8 new cases and 25 contacts each week. These residents are followed for ten days and our contacts for 14 days. Each week we post data on our Facebook page and on our website and email it to our local leaders to keep the community informed.

### **UPDATE ON CASES**

Our most recent data shows that from August 1 to September 18, 2020 Cheshire had 25 reported positive cases for Covid-19 among the 16 to 27 age range. Eleven were females while the remaining fourteen were males.

Chesprocott was able to speak to 19 of the 25 cases. Those that were not spoken to received letter to contact us but as of today we still have not spoken to them. We cannot emphasize the importance of returning our phone calls so we can assist you. 68% of those spoken to provided their close contact information for us to follow-up. We had 2 cases (10%) who refused to provide their close contacts information to Chesprocott. We found that 12 of the 19 cases (63%) obtained Covid-19 tested because they came in close contact with a positive case. Only 3 cases (15%) got tested due to school requirements. Only 3 cases were tested as a requirement of their employment. All of these cases were Cheshire residents, none were residents of the correctional facilities.

In conclusion, “Cheshire is experiencing what other towns across the US are experiencing. It troubles me that most of these young cases were around positive cases,” said Director of Health Maura Esposito. How were they exposed? Many reported having a positive family member or being at gatherings with family and friends, some mentioned attending sporting events. If you are going to be meet friends and family, we want to stress the importance of washing your hands, wearing your mask, and staying 6 feet from people. “I truly believe that people were letting their guard down and started spending more time with others where they did not practice social distancing” stated Esposito. “We know that not practicing social distancing will increase your chances of contracting the disease if you’re around an infectious person. As your public health agency, we are working to increase educating the youth that they are still vulnerable to Covid-19. Half of those interviewed were asymptomatic while the remaining half presented symptoms. Because those chances are like a coin toss, we need to educate the public that the virus is still present in our community and the younger generation can present with symptoms which luckily have not presented as fatal, but there is still many unknowns of this virus.

Lastly let’s remember to **Minimize the chance of exposure**. The most common way to catch the virus that causes COVID-19 is from close contact with other people. Avoiding gatherings of people and practicing social distancing can help reduce the chances of exposure to the virus. Make sure to comply with any orders your state has issued about sheltering in place or staying at home.

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