



**NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
AND MENTAL HYGIENE**
Dave A. Chokshi, MD
Commissioner

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Friday, September 25, 2020
(347) 396-4177

Dear Reporter,

We have another update to share concerning COVID-19 case growth in Brooklyn and Queens.

As of today, the percent of tests returning positive results in areas of concern are as follows:

- Gravesend/Homecrest (6.42%)
- Midwood (5.05%)
- Kew Gardens (4.18%)
- Edgemere/Far Rockaway (4.05%)
- Borough Park (3.9%)
- Bensonhurst/Mapleton (3.45%)
- Gerritsen Beach/Homecrest/Sheepshead Bay (3.34%)
- Flatlands/Midwood (3.1%)

Six of the areas above have increased since the day before.

Williamsburg is another area where we are observing a faster increase in cases compared to other parts of the City, even though the test positivity rate is below 3% (1.55%).

While the most expansive growth is generally occurring in these areas in Brooklyn and Queens, viruses do not respect boundaries and unchecked case growth in one part of the city can affect others. We are starting to see early warning signals in neighborhoods surrounding the zip codes above, particularly in southern Brooklyn and northeast Queens.

Also concerning is that we are starting to see an uptick in the number of hospitalized patients in at least one hospital in southern Brooklyn. With COVID-19, increases in hospitalizations and intensive care unit admissions generally follow an increase in cases.

On Friday, to safeguard public health, the Health Department issued a Commissioner's Order to non-public schools in the six Brooklyn and two Queens ZIP codes above. The COVID-19 risk reduction measures for non-public schools within these ZIP codes include:

- All individuals on the school premises should remain at least 6 feet apart at all times, except in emergencies or when doing so would create a safety hazard;
- Face coverings are required in school buildings at all times, except for individuals who cannot wear a face covering because of developmental, medical or age reasons;
- Coordinating with the Health Department and the Test + Trace Corps to identify, isolate and prevent the spread of COVID-19; and
- Following established protocols for opening and closing schools if a student or staff is confirmed with COVID-19, and excluding students and staff who have symptoms of or are confirmed with COVID-19 or have been identified as a close contact to someone with COVID-19.

The schools must comply with risk reduction measures in order to prevent spread in the school community. Schools not in compliance of the Orders will face violations and possible closures. The fine for violating a Commissioner's Order is \$1,000.