



November 5, 2020

This week Rutherford High School was forced to close for two weeks, not because of a high number of positive COVID cases, but because of a lack of cooperation with contact tracing. This is a disturbing trend that can have far reaching consequences for our community. According to Governor Murphy, 59% of people do NOT cooperate with contact tracers. And while I had hoped Rutherford would behave better than the state average, it seems there are many people who have chosen to obstruct the efforts of our Health Department.

This has been a long 9 months for everyone, and many people will have an understandable lapse in judgment as COVID fatigue sets in. But when a person attends a gathering and is notified of a possible exposure, it is critical for the health of our community that they cooperate with our Health Department. It is never acceptable to compound a problem by hindering the ability to break the chain of transmission, slow community spread and restart the economy by refusing to divulge information that can help our Health Department.

When the Health Department staff conducts contact tracing, a person can expect a thorough interview that takes 30-45 minutes. They will be asked questions including but not limited to their general demographic information (age, sex, etc), household situation, if they are exhibiting symptoms, their activities for the past 14 days and whether they will have access to food and medication if they are in quarantine. The benefits of keeping our schools and community open far outweigh any inconveniences an individual may experience by cooperating with the Health Department.

Furthermore, Police Chief Russo is asking residents to strictly adhere to the Governor's Executive Orders regulating gatherings and social distancing as we are seeing a steady spike in COVID-19 positive cases within the Borough. For the latest information on Executive Orders, please visit [covid19.nj.gov/faqs](https://www.covid19.nj.gov/faqs). General indoor gatherings must be limited to 25 people or 25% of a room's capacity - whichever number is lower. All attendees at indoor gatherings must wear face coverings and stay six feet apart.

As we have seen throughout the nation, unregulated, close-quarters events can be super-spreaders for the virus. House parties in violation of the executive orders are irresponsible and counterproductive to all of the hard work we all have done within the Borough. Chief Russo is asking all residents on behalf of the men and women of the Rutherford Police Department to limit household gatherings to what is permissible in the executive orders to help keep this second wave of COVID infections manageable which will allow our officers to focus their efforts where they are needed.

Sincerely, Mayor Frank Nunziato