



## Board of County Commissioners

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## MEDIA ADVISORY

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Federal Government Ends Public Health Emergency Order For COVID-19

Effective May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2023, the national Public Health Emergency (PHE) order that was implemented by the federal government during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, has expired. Many tools, treatments, and testing will remain available, but the CDC's guidance and ability to collect and share certain data will change.

Commissioner Shaun Van Doren stated, "The end of the PHE order is primarily driven by the decrease in COVID cases, along with the widespread availability of testing and vaccines. With the conclusion of the public health emergency, it is time to acknowledge the work and dedication of the public health workforce and medical care providers that continuously worked throughout the pandemic. I would like to acknowledge and thank them for their devotion and commitment."

Since March 15, 2020, there have been 30,581 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Hunterdon County, and 252 confirmed fatalities resulting from COVID infection. Since December 2020, over 25,000 doses of vaccine in more than 100 clinics have been provided to residents, by the Hunterdon County Health Department. With more than 90% of residents receiving at least one dose of vaccine, the protection against severe illness has served as a major factor for the federal conclusion of the public health emergency.

Director for the Department of Health, Karen DeMarco shared, "Since Hunterdon County's first confirmed case of COVID-19 on March 15, 2020, our office has provided over 1,100 daily reports of the number of newly confirmed COVID cases. The COVID case reporting from the Department has served as key information for medical personnel, first responders, elected officials, school leadership, community agencies, local and state public health staff, and for the public.

Although the PHE order has been lifted, residents are encouraged to continue taking steps to protect their health during periods of increased illness, and the Department will remain diligent in providing updated information to the Commissioners and the public on an ongoing basis."

Despite the conclusion of the public health emergency, the Health Department will continue to provide COVID vaccine and free test kits to residents, while there is public demand for the service.