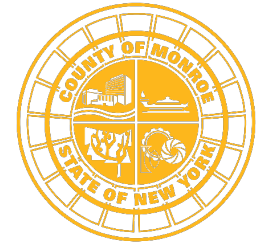




News from the Office of
Adam J. Bello
Monroe County Executive



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**BUSINESS, GOVERNMENT & HEALTHCARE LEADERS SHARE MESSAGE:
“VAX-BOOST- MASK — LET’S KEEP MONROE OPEN”**

County, City, Wegmans, Healthcare Systems and Chamber of Commerce Encourage Community to Work Together to Stay Safe While Gathering, Working, and Shopping

(Rochester, New York) — Business, government and healthcare leaders gathered today at the Wegmans Conference Center to call on the community to “Vax-Boost-Mask” in order to keep the economy and commerce moving, entertainment venues going, and our children healthy and in school — despite the current surge in COVID infections and hospitalizations. A similar surge in COVID cases last year at this time shut down the economy, closed offices and limited business operations.

New York State is currently mandating that people wear masks in all indoor public places unless businesses or venues implement a vaccine requirement. Monroe County Executive Adam Bello says keeping day-to-day lives as normal as possible should be the focus.

“I believe most people are concerned with keeping our kids safe, having stores, restaurants and businesses that we depend on remain open, and on keeping businesses, employees and customers safe and healthy,” said Bello. “We know how to do that — masking indoors, getting vaccinated and tested are common sense, proven ways to stop the spread of this virus and the coming Omicron variant. These precautions will also help limit the spread of the flu.”

Bello was joined by President and CEO of Wegmans Food Markets Colleen Wegman, Rochester Mayor-Elect Malik Evans, Monroe County Commissioner of Public Health Dr. Michael Mendoza, Greater Rochester Chamber of Commerce CEO Robert J. Duffy, and the Chief Medical Officers of the University of Rochester Medical Center and Rochester Regional Health, to announce the “Let’s Keep Monroe Open” effort.

“Let’s Keep Monroe Open” posters distributed to businesses, organizations and employers will show their customers and employees that they provide a protected and safe indoor environment. Community leaders ask that residents and customers support those businesses by following the short-term and common sense guidelines.

“We are proud to support Let’s Keep Monroe Open on behalf of our business community,” said Colleen Wegman, president and CEO of Wegmans Food Markets. “We are honored to call Rochester our hometown and want to keep our community and economy healthy for everyone who lives and works here. It’s up to each of us to do our part to help.”

Rochester Mayor-Elect Malik Evans says it is important to support and protect city businesses while helping to bring down the COVID infection rate.

“As we think about this upcoming holiday season, we must ensure safety is our number one priority. I am committed to leading by example, which is why my family and I were vaccinated and have received a booster, when eligible, said Mayor-Elect Evans. “If we want to keep Monroe County open, it is crucial that we get vaccinated, mask up, and take all proper precautions. I also urge all residents to take advantage of all free testing options available.”

Greater Rochester Chamber of Commerce President and CEO Robert J. Duffy believes Chamber members are already doing the right thing.

“Each week I speak to and visit dozens of local businesses, and am impressed by their leadership in insisting masks or proof of vaccination for entry. I’m also impressed by the patrons who are taking responsibility to be safe and protect their neighbors”, said Greater Rochester Chamber of Commerce President and CEO Bob Duffy. “We thank Governor Kathy Hochul and Monroe County Executive Adam Bello for their leadership, and the Greater Rochester business community for their cooperation in this effort. Let’s all continue working to help stop the spread and get our region back on track.”

The state mandate and current Monroe County state of emergency is in response to the high COVID hospitalization and ICU numbers that are forcing the cancellation and delay of many needed non-COVID related surgeries. Monroe County Public Health Commissioner, Dr. Michael Mendoza said bringing down the COVID hospitalization rate does not mean shutting down businesses, restaurants and stores.

“Our region has been experiencing an increase in serious illness and hospitalizations due to COVID-19. The holiday season and the Omicron variant threaten to make matters worse, posing a particularly significant risk to unvaccinated individuals, older adults, immunocompromised people and other vulnerable members of our community,” said Dr. Mendoza. “It is heartening to see Monroe County businesses pull together to prevent harm by taking these steps to keep the virus from spreading from one person to another. Their employees, customers -- and everyone those people come into contact with – can feel safer because of it.”

The “Let’s Keep Monroe Open” poster is downloadable for printing at www.monroecounty.gov/keepopen.

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