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August 21, 2020

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ON COVID-19 CASE REPORTING

Due to significant public concern arising from recently posted COVID case counts, the Township of Livingston is providing the following information to explain and clarify the sources of reported cases.

Livingston Reports Seven Confirmed Cases in August

A report issued on August 21, 2020 suggested that there were 15 new COVID-19 cases in Livingston over the past 24 hours, understandably raising concerns among residents.

To address those concerns, the Township reports that there have only **been seven (7) confirmed positive cases in the entire month of August** as reported to the Livingston Health Department. The reason for the discrepancy is explained below.

Discrepancy Due to Database Changes

Media outlets have access to and report COVID cases, at least in part, using reports issued daily by Essex County, which in turn reports cases based on a statewide database.

That database is not an “up to the minute” report of diagnosed cases in real time, particularly with respect to the residency of each case: Cases are often reported – or misreported – based on place of employment, where the test was administered, place of temporary confinement for treatment, or other location outside of the affected individual’s municipality of residence.

In addition, cases are often entered into the database after the actual date of the confirmed test.

With subsequent research, follow-up, and additional information, the database is then revised on an ongoing basis, including cases being added or subtracted from days (or even weeks) prior. In some instances, deductions make it appear as though Livingston “lost” cases. These corrections result in day-to-day fluctuations in the case counts that are not representative of actual new cases in that 24-hour period.

Local Case Reporting

The Livingston Health Department receives notification of positive test results for Livingston residents and assumes responsibility for follow-up, contact tracing, etc. for those cases.

That local database more accurately reflects the actual change in cases during any 24 hours or other period of time. As noted above, there have only been seven (7) total new positive cases confirmed in Livingston in August as reported to the Livingston Health Department.

In light of the confusion and concern arising out of the fluctuating County/State database reports, the Township will soon begin reporting on actual confirmed Livingston cases in real time.

Updates will be available on the Livingston Township website at livingstonnj.org.