

Promoting Staff and Participant Wellness

NYAPRS 12th Annual
Rehabilitation & Recovery Academy

Presenters:

Doug Meyer, Director of Services, MHA in Essex County
Paula Fries, COO, Association for Mental Health and Wellness

Promoting Staff and Participant Wellness

- **Who We Are - MHA in Essex County**

- Located Upstate - Essex County, NY, includes Lake Placid, N.Y.
- Community Demographics: 37,000 total population, no large cities, only 7 traffic lights in the county, 2% minority, poverty is widespread, major industries are tourism and prisons
- Agency Stats: Census, Staffing, Annual Budget: 25 staff serving about 900 unique individuals per year
- Participants We Serve: Adults only
- Programs & Services: OMH Supported Housing (30 beds), Health Home Case Management (average monthly census 140), mobile crisis services including a direct law enforcement referral program (LEMHRS), 24/7 warmline, psychosocial groups. ACCESS-VR contract, Adult HCBS.
- Our Wellness Vision & Approach: MHA in Essex County seeks to assist adults with behavioral health issues by meeting them where they are in their recovery. We embrace a harm reduction approach.

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- **Who We Are - Association for Mental Health and Wellness**

- Located Downstate - Suffolk County, NY:
 - Very high cost of living; Poverty 6.8%; Homeless 3,843
- Community Demographics:
 - Population: 1.52+ Million; 18.61% Hispanic; 7.17 % Black/AA; 3.99% Asian; 66% White; 2020 Census reported increase in diversity from 2010
- Agency Stats:
 - Annual Budget \$15M; Staffing – 187 employees
- Participants We Serve:
 - 1746 active, adults, children, families; BH/SED/CT ; co-occurring substance abuse and medical conditions
- Programs & Services: MHA affiliate/advocacy; (2) PROS, HCBS/CORE, HHCM, Peer Training , Peer Support Services, Recovery Center; Veterans - SSVF, Dwyer Project; Food Pantries; Supportive Housing; Workforce Training & Education; opening Peer Run Crisis Residence 2022
- Our Wellness Vision & Approach: Person-centered, trauma informed, recovery & diversity driven. “Empowering and inspiring people of all communities to identify, pursue and sustain healthy, meaningful lives.”

The Impact of Covid-19

OUR PANDEMIC YEAR—A COVID-19 TIMELINE

On March 11, the WHO declared COVID-19 a pandemic. Here is a look back at a year in disruption.

A MYSTERIOUS NEW ILLNESS

Images appear of Wuhan in lockdown, where officials attempt to contain a mysterious virus. Soon after, new cases and deaths related to (what's later named) COVID-19 surge in Europe.

THE WORLD SHUTS DOWN

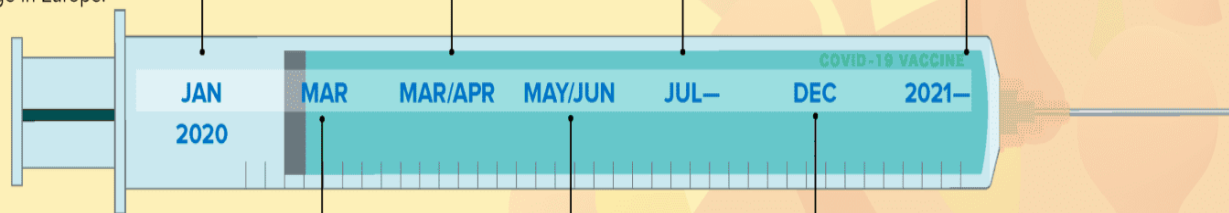
Countries seal borders; sports teams cancel seasons; schools close and employees go home. People start wearing masks and "social distancing."

UPTICK IN MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES

People struggle as continued unemployment and/or working from home without childcare/school takes its toll. U.S. break records for daily cases/deaths.

LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL?

2021 begins with a race to vaccinate. Cases and deaths begin to fall. But the variants are still a threat, vaccine rollout is uneven, and we are still wearing masks.



THE VIRUS SPREADS, CASES MULTIPLY

The Grand Princess cruise ship, docked outside of San Fran, has passengers with COVID-19; Bay Area is first in the U.S. to announce shelter-in-place orders; hospitals become overwhelmed as cases grow; there is a nationwide shortage of PPE.

FLATTENING THE CURVE—FOR A WHILE

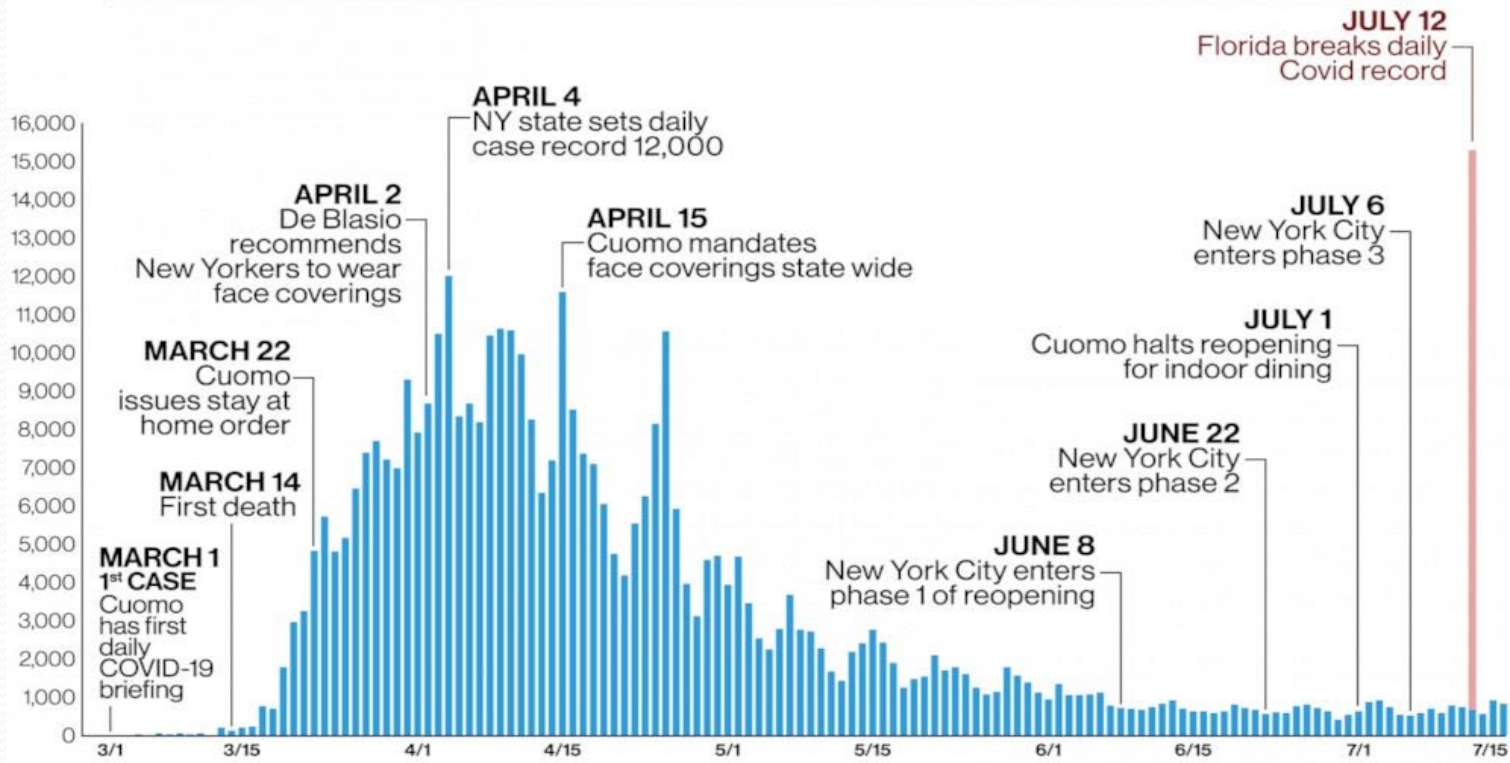
After "flattening the curve," cases begin to skyrocket again as states "reopen" in different phases. Researchers continue to race to identify treatments and make vaccines.

NEW HOPE, NEW MUTATIONS

The FDA authorizes two vaccines. Major variants begin to circulate, some of which might impact the effectiveness of vaccines.

2020 – A Year Like No Other

New York's Covid Timeline



SOURCE: THE COVID TRACKING PROJECT

abc NEWS

2020 – A Year Like No Other

- January 21st - – CDC Confirms 1st US Coronavirus
- January 31st - WHO Declares Global Health Emergency
- February 5th – US Declares Public Health Emergency
- **March 7th – Last Weekend of Broadway Open!**
- March 11th – WHO Declares Covid-19 a Pandemic
- March 12th - DeBlasio places NYC on Lock-down
- March 15th – Cuomo places NY State on Lockdown
- March 16th - 18th --- What to Do?
- **March 17th – CMS Temporarily Expands Telehealth**

2020 – A Year Like No Other

- **March 2020 – Pivoting as an Essential Business**
 - Mobile Staff & Services – 75% already mobile
 - Reformatting Program & Service Delivery – Telehealth
 - Limited On-site Operations
 - Developing a Hybrid Model – WFH and Office Time
 - Zoom, Zoom, Zoom
 - Leveraging Other Tech Solutions: MS Teams, TigerTouch, SageSurfer, ActionTrac
 - Tech Barriers & Disparities Revealed
 - Staying Safe & SMART

2020 – A Year Like No Other

- **Challenges and Opportunities at MHAW**
 - Operating a homeless shelter during a pandemic
 - Cerner Millennium Implementation
 - Parent / Teacher / Worker / Care Giver
 - Managing Grief & Loss: family, clients, friends
 - George Floyd's Murder / DEI Reckoning
 - Strategic Planning Commences
 - CEO Retires... In Search of a New Leader

2021– A Year of Recovery...?

- **MHAW**

- Miracle of Miracles – Vaccines Arrive
- Project Hope for Covid-19
- PROS Awakenings – June in-person hybrid groups
- Pop Up Vaccination Clinics – 172 starfish
- **MHA in Essex** had quickly learned to provide virtual services in 2020 and in 2021 started to return to in person services. By April of 2021 98% of our staff were vaccinated and our staff were back in the community and in homes.

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- **MHA in Essex County - Participant Experience**
 - **Health Concerns:** The existing opioid crisis worsened. In 2020 there were 4 fatal opioid overdoses in Essex County. To date in 2021 the death toll stands at 11. alcohol abuse increased. Domestic violence increased.
 - **Stressors:** financial stressors initially but reduced with stimulus payments
 - **Impact on Mental Health & Substance Abuse:** Referrals from law enforcement increased almost 300 %. Warmline calls increased 200 %
 - **Tech Disparities:** Many consumers lacked internet access and smartphones. Instituted phone card program so consumers could remain linked with providers.
 - **Food Insecurity:** Food pantry transition to delivery
 - **Discovering Resilience:** Our consumers with mental health concerns were largely socially isolated to start with. Most adapted to the new COVID environment well.

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- **MHAW Participant Experience**
 - **Health Concerns:** Covid-19 restrictions; access to PPE; maintaining medication access; cancelled medical appointments; increase in medical admissions
 - **Stressors:** financial \$\$; parenting & teaching; transportation; layoffs/job loss; social isolation; increased food demands;
 - **Impact on Mental Health & Substance Abuse:** Isolation = increase in self-reported depression & anxiety, substance use, tobacco use, over-eating; **Grief:** loss of family, friends, roommates to Covid-19
 - **Tech Disparities:** Limited to no internet access in residences; libraries closed, open access WiFi unavailable or poor quality; lack of reliable & affordable smartphones; increased data usage and limited carrier range; leveraging Service Dollars to purchase laptops; grateful for telephonic connections
 - **Food Insecurity:** 600% increase in Food Pantry usage; Grab & Go delivery to participants; creative arts materials included
 - **Discovering Resilience:** natural supports flourished; meetups via FaceTime; safe gatherings outside; many realized & used the tools learned for self-care & coping -> and moved on.

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- **MHA in Essex County - Impact on Staff**

- **Personal Life Stressors:** Mad dash to get staff printers/scanners to facilitate work at home. Most staff were responsible and get their work done. We retain a work from home as desired policy. Staff take turns with office coverage.
- **Work / Life Balance:** Many staff ignored work hours and had to be reminded when the work day ends.
- **Parent & Teacher:** Staff with children in school were given flexible work hours.
- **Lack of In Person Contact**
 - With clients: Staff lacked the personal connection that comes with ftf
 - With colleagues: Staff needed Zoom meetings with supervisors so we can get a read on how they are doing. No hallway conversations and staff comradery.
- **Compassion Fatigue:** The increase in workload and degree of crisis intensity caused supervisor concerns about staff burn-out.

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- **MHAW- Impact on Staff**
 - **Personal Life Stressors:** Covid-19 risks, insomnia, shared space stress, no down time, irritability
 - **Work / Life Balance:** blurred boundaries, sitting too much
 - **Parent & Teacher:** Juggling WFH and “home-schooling”; women most affected; schedule accommodations needed
 - **Lack of In Person Contact**
 - With clients: missing personal connection, F:F contact; concern their for health and risks
 - With colleagues: virtual meetings a god-send, but missed each other; disconnection from routine, structure; time-management issues developed, performance concerns
 - **Compassion Fatigue:** Covid risk is everywhere; masks - love them/hate them! No time to do (blank)...

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- **What We Did - MHA in Essex County**
 - We invited all consumers to a virtual forum each Wednesday, plus an Open Mic Thursday evenings and TGIF Friday mornings
 - After virtual monthly staff meetings we provided a one hour coffee hour for informal chit chat among staff
 - We had weekly virtual case review with a clinical consultant and made time for individual staff sessions with our clinical consultant
 - Director of Services scheduled in person outdoor masked meetings with every staff member individually.
 - Required vacation days for staff who had not had a vacation during COVID

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- **What We Did - MHAW**
 - **Participants**
 - Outreach Wellness Check-in Calls & Visits
 - Weekly Zoom Community Meetings
 - SMART In-person Services
 - Grab & Go Food Pantry Delivery & Arts Materials, Games
 - Hosted Vaccination Pop-up Clinics
 - Assisting in scheduling vaccination appointments
 - Vaccine Education & Hesitancy Workshops with Medical Experts

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- **What We Did – MHAW**
 - **Staff**
 - Weekly All Staff Huddles
 - Daily Check-In's with Teams
 - Morning Meditation
 - Comedy Break on Thursdays at Noon
 - Parenting Collective
 - EAP Offerings
 - Wellness Committee Events:
 - So Much Sitting: Back Health Presentation
 - Cigna Emotional Well Being Seminar
 - Mindfulness-based Stress Reduction Presentation (Northwell Cardiologist)

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- **Where We Are Today - MHA in Essex County**
- The Delta variant is worsening but we will maintain ftf services
- We continue a work from home policy with shared office coverage.
- We have increased ability to outreach law enforcement referrals in person
- We are transporting consumers for vaccination and boosters
- We are working with OASAS partners to get Narcan kits out in the community.

Covid-19 Vaccination Progress

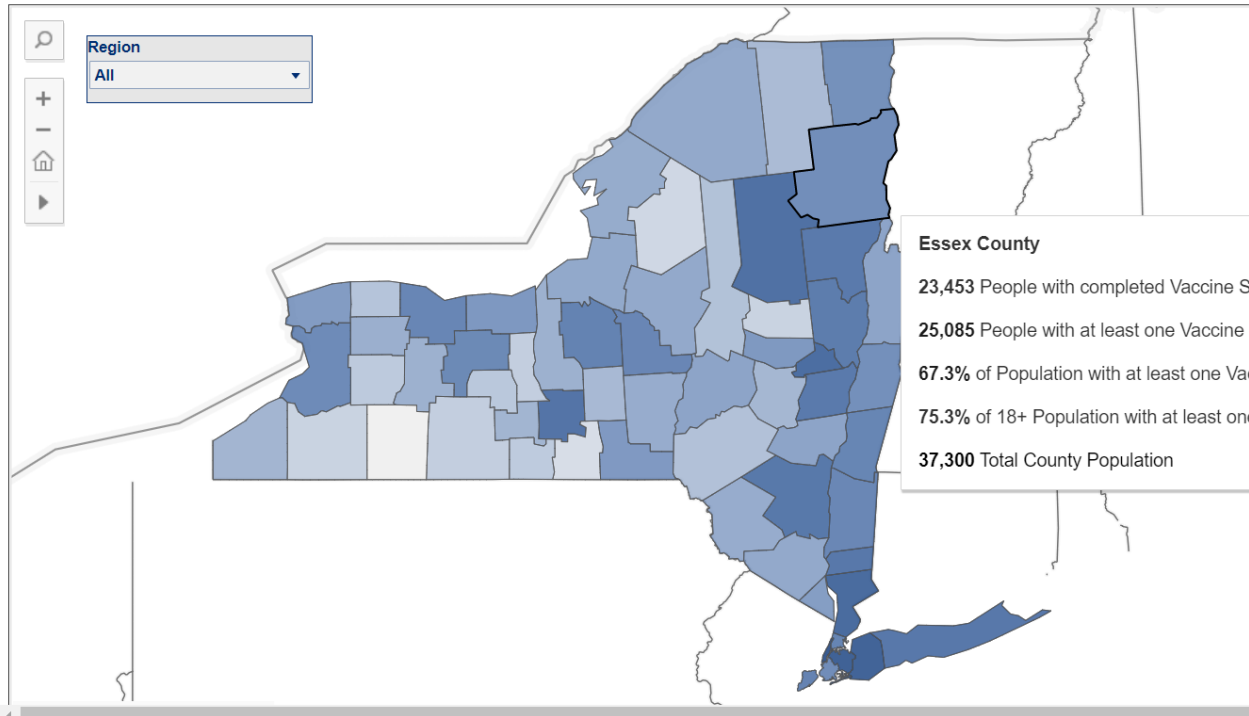
Essex County

Vaccination Progress to Date | De x +

coronavirus.health.ny.gov/vaccination-progress-date

Apps Welcome to Action... New Tab Welcome to Cerner... The Health Comm... ONC's Cures Act Fi... Microsoft Office Ho... Sign In MyQuest - Billing Reading list

14,509,628	72.2%	13,542,754	85.0%	13,090,851	65.5%	12,254,656	77.1%
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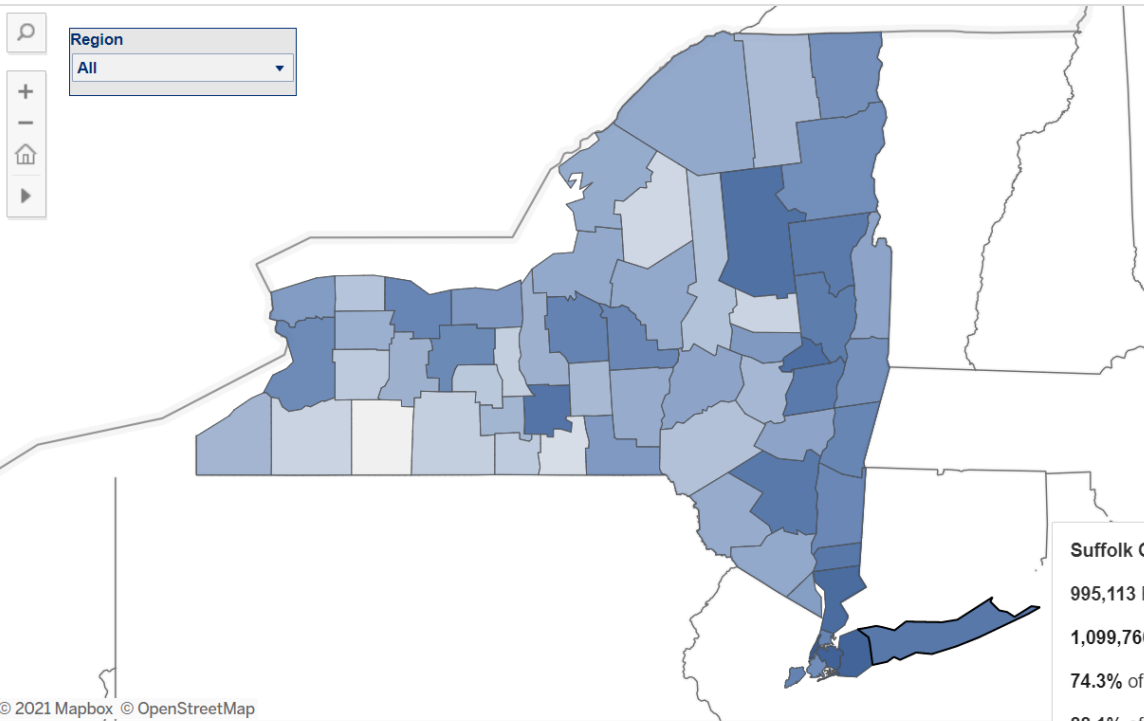
County	First Dose	Se
Albany	225,793	
Allegany	20,599	
Bronx	1,003,019	
Broome	122,959	
Cattaraugus	38,703	
Cayuga	44,927	
Essex	25,085	
Franklin	28,004	
Fulton	27,010	
Genesee	33,681	
Greene	29,129	
Hamilton	3,395	
Herkimer	33,566	
Jefferson	66,585	

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- **Where We Are Today - MHAW**
 - Commitment to our Mission, Vision, and Values
 - 100 % Fully Vaccinated Staff effective 11/1/21
 - Addressing work-force transitions
 - Safe “Re-opening” onsite for All (staff & participants)
 - Helping our members get vaccinated, boosters
 - PROS 80% HCBS 60% Housing 98% ACM 40%
 - Embracing the benefits and reality of “telehealth”
 - Accepting change – this is the new normal
 - Remaining hopeful...

Covid-19 Vaccination Progress

Suffolk County

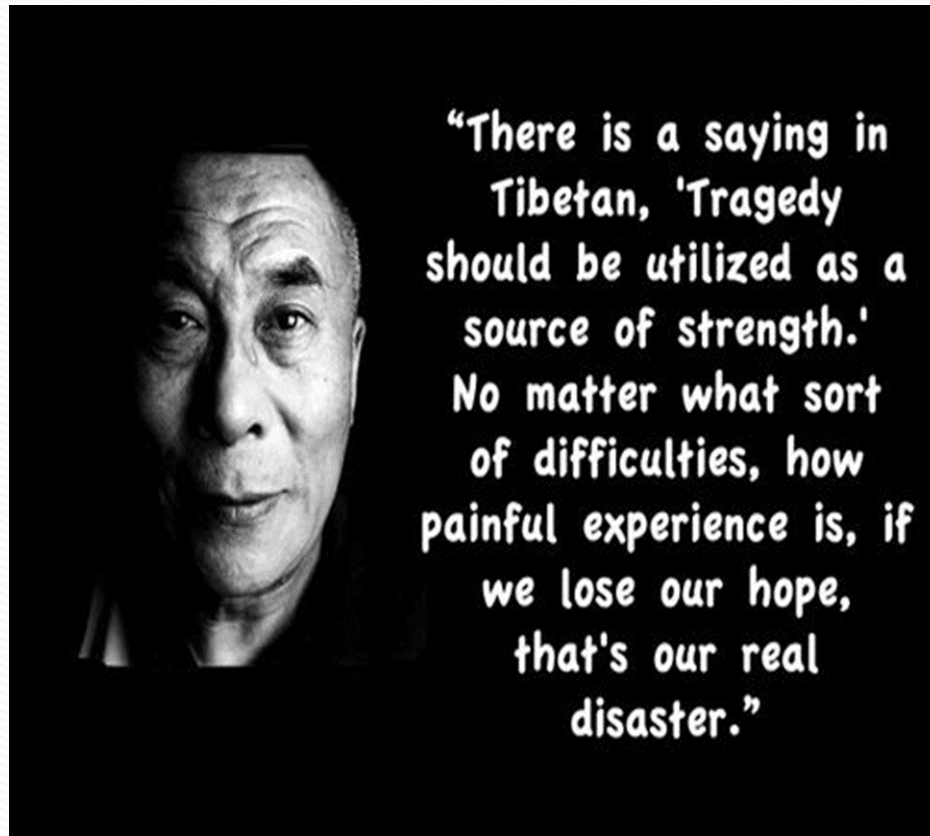


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Cattaraugus	38,703	
Cayuga	44,927	
Chautauqua	72,987	
Chemung	43,882	
Chenango	28,209	
Clinton	53,646	
Columbia	41,864	
Cortland	26,862	
Delaware	24,212	
Dutchess	203,184	
Erie	627,651	
Essex	25,085	
Franklin	28,004	
Suffolk County	27,010	
	33,681	
	29,129	
	3,395	
	33,566	
	66,585	
	1,742,988	
	13,056	
	36,795	

% People Vaccinated with at least one vaccine dose
44.4%

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- Witnessing Resilience & Holding onto Hope



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- **Questions?**
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Thank You for Attending!