First Darien COVID-19 Death Announced; First Selectman on What You Can Do to Beat This

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First Selectman Jayme Stevenson announced Darien had its first COVID-19 death on Sunday. She sent out this announcement in a Facebook video. While Stevenson did not name the deceased town resident, she said that person is not elderly.

"This isn't just a data point: This is a member of our community," Stevenson said in the video, which runs more than five minutes. "Please extend your prayers to this family."

Stevenson said she couldn't give out any further details for privacy reasons, but mentioned that the victim was middle aged.

She said: "It hits home for me because this individual was about my age and the age of my husband. So the virus really isn't sparing anyone at this point."

(*See also the "In Contrast, More Deaths (10) in New Canaan" section at the bottom of this article.*)

Also in Stevenson's Statement

MASKS

With the federal government suggesting that people wear masks to help prevent the spread of the virus (if you have it and don't know it, you're less likely to pass it on to others if you're wearing a mask in public), Stevenson said she hopes to arrange to get them to town residents:

"I am [...] working on a source to make sure everybody in Darien will be able to have a mask at some point soon, so stay tuned for more information about that," she said.

"Surgical masks and N95 masks are in very short supply, so please leave those masks for our first responders and health care workers. You can make your own at home [...] from a handkerchief, a bandana, a ski gaiter, [...] [or use] something that can cover your nose and mouth when you're out in public."

You can find instructions online for making a simple mask, she added.

TESTING

Murphy Medical Associates is continuing to test people at the Darien High School parking lot on Mondays from 1 to 4 p.m. and, "we will be opening up more hours of testing this Friday from 9 to 12 [noon], so hopefully we will have every Monday afternoon and every Friday morning, until we don't need that service any more."

To get tested, "you don't need a doctor's order. You can go on the [Murphy Medical Associates] website and they will do the screening and issue the order for you. [...]

Murphy Medical isn't the only test provider available, she said. The town government website (on this Web page) has a "comprehensive list of calling centers and test sites" Darien residents can use, she said.

THE MOST IMPORTANT THING YOU CAN DO

"Many people email me and message me and say what can you do," Stevenson said. "The most important thing that you can do is to stay home. Home is the safest place for you and your family.

"Please: No play dates. I know it's really hard, moms and dads, to [not] let your kids go outside and play with kids in the neighborhood, but, quite frankly, our kids are probably the ones who aren't getting sick but are transmitting [the virus] and they can come home to you or to their grandparents.

"So please stay home and please don't gather in your neighborhoods, on the town fields, at the town beaches. If we can do this for just a little while longer, I think that we can flatten the curve and we can get beyond this really crazy time.

"What else can you do? Be patient. Be kind. And stay calm. I know that there's a lot of stress out there. People are anxious, and they're angry, but we are all doing our best to get through this together, so please be patient.

"Distance yourself. I think everybody's heard the rules by now: at least six feet between folks who don't live in your household and others. It's really important to distance yourself.

"Distance yourself when you're outside, when you're walking and jogging. I've gotten a lot of people writing to me and saying, 'People will run by me, and they don't respect the distance,' and there's a lot of anxiety being created in our community because of that. So be respectful and understand that distancing rules apply, even when you're enjoying the outside, which I hope you do as the weather gets better.

SIGN UP FOR CODE RED

"And, really important, if you're not yet signed for Code Red — that's the Town of Darien emergency notification system," you can do it by getting the link at the top of the town government website (one of the two links now in the red bar at the top). Or you can just follow this link.

You can sign up for emails, phone messages or both. "I promise that I will not abuse that and call you too many times or fill up your inbox with unnecessary messages," Stevenson said. "I will only send messages when it's absolutely necessary."

WHAT ELSE YOU CAN DO

"What else can you do? Please thank our first responders and our health care workers. They're on the front lines. They're doing God's work right now. They're working very, very hard to keep us all safe, and I work very closely with our emergency management team to coordinate all of our efforts and to keep you and your family safe.

"So when you see them, thank them."

IF YOU NEED HELP

"And if you need help, please reach out to me or to the Darien Human Services Department or to someone else that may be able to support you. I know it's a difficult time, but we're here for you and we want to help you if you need the help. Please don't hesitate to reach out."

In Contrast, More Deaths (10) in New Canaan

New Canaan, by contrast has had 10 deaths from COVID-19. That town's emergency management director, Mike Handler, in his daily announcement on Sunday explained some of the patterns of the epidemic in that town. Handler's statement may explain some (not all) of the reasons why:

- Of the 82 confirmed positive COVID-19 cases in New Canaan, there are clusters of infection at both Waveny LifeCare Networks and Silver Hill Hospital. Nineteen positive cases among residents and staff at Waveny and six positive cases among staff and patients at Silver Hill.
- Of the ten fatalities, nine involved individuals over the age of 80, the remaining one was between the ages of 60 and 69. Six of our deaths involve residents at Waveny. The Office of Emergency Management, the Health Department and EMS continue to work with our partners at Waveny and Silver Hill to ensure they have the proper equipment, training and procedures in place.