MEMORANDUM

To: NYSAC Board of Directors, County Executives, County Administrators and Managers
From: Stephen J. Acquario, Executive Director
Re: Micro-Cluster Metrics
Date: October 22, 2020

Under Governor Andrew M. Cuomo's Cluster Action Initiative, New York State is using testing data, hospitalization data, and mapping software to detect small outbreaks of COVID-19, known as "micro-clusters", and implement restrictions based on the severity of spread. Yesterday, the Governor released the metrics used to identify "cluster zone" focus areas, the restrictions for each zone, and the criteria that geographic areas must meet to no long be considered a zone.

Identifying a Focus Zone
Focus zones can receive one of three designations: (1) red zone (micro-cluster); (2) orange zone (warning/buffer); or yellow zone (precautionary/buffer). The metrics for entering each zone vary based on the population of the county in which the geographic area is located. See page 5 of the attached guidance for a table with the population tiers and metrics.

Implementing a Focus Zone
After a geographic area has been designated a cluster zone, the State will implement restrictions to limit the spread of the virus. All zones will be subject to the following restrictions.
- Increased community testing efforts
- Increased enforcement and compliance efforts
- Outreach from state officials to support local containment and educational efforts
- Increased contact tracing support
- Increased public education outreach where necessary

In addition, there are restrictions on worship, mass gatherings, businesses, dining, and schools for each zone. See page 7 of the attached guidance for a table with the restrictions for each zone.

Exiting a Focus Zone
Fourteen days after a geographic area is placed in a focus zone, the NYS Department of Health (NYSDOH), in consultation with the local health department and global health experts, will decide whether the focus zone will be extended, modified, or ended. NYSDOH will base this decision on whether the data demonstrate that the area has reduced viral spread to a level able to be contained given testing, contact tracing, and other health system metrics. The target metrics for exiting each zone again vary based on the population of the county within the geographic area. See page 8 of the attached guidance for these metrics.

The County Perspective

As of the writing of this memorandum, cluster zones have been identified in Broome, Chemung, Orange, Rockland, Steuben, and Queens counties. We anticipate that more zones will be identified in other areas of the state as the virus spreads, and we encourage you to send NYSAC any questions or concerns related to these metrics or restrictions.