

Metric #7

Contact Tracing Capacity

The CDC and WHO also recommend that robust contact tracing programs be in place before local governments consider easing restrictions. Contact tracing helps prevent the spread of COVID-19 by rapidly interviewing positive patients; identifying their close contacts; interviewing and alerting those contacts to the risk of infection; and instructing those contacts to quarantine or isolate for 14 days, to be sure they don't spread COVID-19 to others. The New York State Department of Health (DOH) has partnered with former New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg, the Johns Hopkins University School of Public Health, and Vital Strategies to recruit and train an army of contact tracers to meet the needs of each region statewide, including from State, City and County Health Departments. In collaboration with these partners, DOH has established region-specific thresholds for the number of contact tracers required, based on the characteristics within each region. Contact tracing helps prevent the spread of COVID-19 through four key steps: -- First, labs report positive cases of COVID-19 to contact tracers on a daily basis via a state reporting system. -- Contact tracers then interview positive patients to identify people they may have been in contact with over the past 14 days. Based on the results of the interview, tracers will advise the positive individual to get tested, and either isolate or quarantine themselves for the following 14 days to prevent further spread of the virus. -- The contact tracer then notifies and interviews each contact of the original positive individual to alert them to their risk of infection, and instructs those contacts to quarantine or isolate for 14 days to prevent further spread. -- Finally, the contact tracer monitors those contacts by text throughout the duration of their quarantine or isolation to see if the contacts are showing any symptoms. Members of the tracing team will also work with any individual being traced who needs social services assistance, such as housing, food, or medicine, while they are quarantined or isolated.