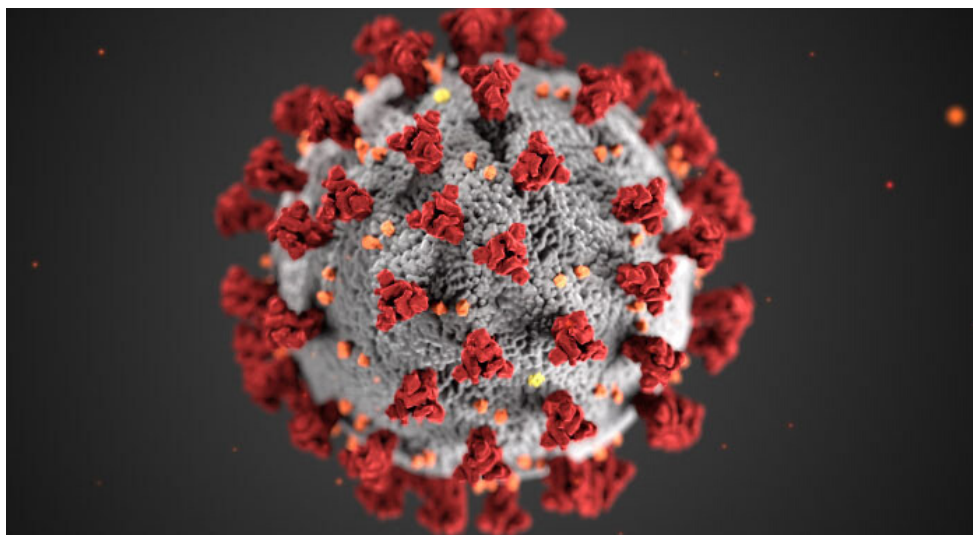


GMPHP NEWSLETTER

**What we have
learned and
what is ahead**

CONTENTS:

COVID-19	1
TRACING	2
ANXIETY	2
LIBRARY	3
MRC	3
TEST SITE	3
RESPONSE	4-6
HEROS	7-8
ANDES	8
FOOD	9
RIDES	9
ERRANDS	10
COVID	11



COVID-19 Not Just the Flu

by Carol Nicholas

I had hoped to be reporting on the CAB meeting presentation by our guest speaker, Sean Hopkins, Senior VP with the New Jersey Hospital Association, but as you know, we canceled the meeting to safeguard our community from Covid-19. As I write this in mid-March, things could look very different by publication in April so please keep that in mind. Things are changing daily.

What We Know from Asian studies:

- COVID-19 is 3-5 times more contagious than the flu.
- 98% of people recover and don't need hospitalization.
- There is a potential for lung damage after recovery.
- In Korea, when severe symptoms were treated early, the mortality rate was .7%.
- 75-80% of cases were spread within families not practicing respiratory hygiene.
- 95-99% of people who practice respiratory hygiene while living with an infected person do not get sick.
- We now know the information from WHO and China were not accurate.

Since American data and knowledge is changing daily, I decided to focus on uplifting stories from our Mercer residents and GMPHP partners. There are so many good things going on that will warm your spirits.

Stay in touch, and stay safe.

Google and Apple Help Trace Contacts



Apple and Google announced a partnership in which the two companies will work together to provide tools that will help track the spread of coronavirus.

Apple said both companies will launch developer tools (called APIs) in May that will "enable interoperability between Android and iOS devices using apps from public health authorities."

"In the coming months, Apple and Google will work to enable a broader Bluetooth-based contact tracing platform by building this functionality into the underlying platforms," Apple said in a press release.

People who opt into the program will receive an "Alert" if they were exposed to someone who tested positive for COVID. The technology raises privacy concerns but it would make it easier to contain future outbreaks. Many people could return to school or work, and it would allow only those exposed to shelter in place. The debate remains whether voluntary apps would be adopted widely enough to provide a public health benefit.



WAYS TO FIGHT COVID ANXIETY

A natural response to uncertainty and unpredictability is fear. Neuroscience shows us that fear shuts down the section of the brain that manages executive decisions. This explains why people are running to the store and buying a 6 month supply of toilet paper. By learning "mindfulness techniques" we can calm the fight or flight reactions, and activate the part of the brain that can focus, make decisions, and learn, says psychologist Dr Harriet Lerner, NY Times, March 18, 2020. She recommends:

- Know the facts - use reliable sources for information
- Keep things in perspective
- Refrain from shaming or blaming
- Identify the source of your anxiety - calmly reflect
- Don't be afraid to ask for help
- Don't procrastinate - prepare now
- While you social isolate, connect with people via text, Facetime, telephone, etc.
- Practice self-compassion
- Take care of yourself - exercise, yoga, sleep, good nutrition. pray/meditate, walk in nature, garden.

Dr. Lerner says, "we should not let fear lead us into isolation or stop us from acting with clarity, compassion and courage. Terrible things happen, but it is still possible to move forward with love and hope."

MERCER COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM

MCLS Responds

MCL's YouTube Stats

MCL now has 167 Videos that have been watched 6,100 times, for a total of 202 hours of viewing.

What's New on MCL's YouTube Channel

The library has been adding new videos daily, which are divided into "playlists" covering such topics as: MCL's Virtual Branch Resources, Job & Career, Crafting, Storytime, Science, Cooking, Computer Instruction, Yoga & Meditation, Games, and Short Stories.

Job & Career Resources

Librarians Donna Wolfe and Nita Mathur are offering virtual help creating and updating resumes and cover letters. Patrons are invited to send in a rough draft of their resume and cover letter, to be reviewed for grammar and layout.

The library also has several videos on YouTube about resume and cover letter creation; an overview of MCL's databases for job searching; and Microsoft Excel instruction.



Social Media

The library is hosting a Virtual Science Fiction Book Club on Monday evenings at 6:30 pm.

The library also hosted an online Library BINGO, which asked patrons to complete different 'challenges' to cross off BINGO boxes.

Check back often - new things are posted every day!

COVID-19: Stay Informed

The library has included a link on our website containing resources to help patrons during the COVID-19 crisis. The link directs patrons to a page containing live updates from the State of NJ, and information from the CDC. For children, parents and teens, we have curated a list of websites to offer help with understanding COVID-19.



TrashedArt Inspiration

The Mercer County Library System's TrashedArt Contest is underway. To help inspire patrons to participate, the library has created a "TrashedArt Inspiration" board on Pinterest. This board is made up of pins that show how to turn everyday recycled items into art!

MRC

During a crisis people often ask, "How can I help?" The **Mercer County Medical Reserve Corps (MRC)** can help you answer that question.

The Mercer County Medical Reserve Corps unit invites any licensed health care professional, professional or retired, who lives or works in Mercer County and any community volunteer who lives or works in Mercer County who has an interest in health and emergency preparedness issues to join. Medical Reserve Corps volunteers supplement existing emergency and public health resources to prepare for and respond to emergencies at a local level. All volunteers receive free training.

For more information, call Stephanie Mendelsohn at 609-989-6898 or email: ja2@njlincs.net

TEST CENTER OPENS

The Mercer County test center opened on March 31st, at the Quakerbridge Mall Parking lot in Lawrence. It is open weekdays from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. and is a collaborative effort between the **County of Mercer, Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Hamilton, Capital Health System, St. Francis Medical Center, and the Trenton Health Team.** The test is by appointment only for symptomatic Mercer County residents age 18 or older who have a prescription from their primary health care provider (PCP). If you are symptomatic for COVID-19 and want to be tested, contact your doctor.

Pictured are Hospital nurses (wearing full personal protective equipment) and Medical Reserve Corps volunteers at the COVID-19 testing site on Thursday. Mercer County Division of Public Health employee Anil Sharma working at the site.



MERCER RESIDENTS RESPOND

by Aayush Gandhi and community volunteers

It's easy to feel overwhelmed and scared from all the news that is being thrown at us these days. That is why this article is going to focus on different initiatives our Mercer community is doing to help during this pandemic. Hopefully, this news brings in a little bit of positivity, because I know we could all use it.

The **Mercer Mask Project** is a grassroots organization that formed in March to make fabric face masks for essential personnel, free of charge. To date, they have made and donated more than 2000 masks to hospitals, other medical facilities, first responders, correctional facilities, homeless ministries, and grocery stores for their essential workers. People are drawn to this organization, because it is a way to actually help, as we collectively experience the coronavirus pandemic. Mercer Mask Project volunteers help in many ways. In addition to the key volunteers who actually sew the face masks, you have others that source the materials, make fabric kits for the sewers, wash and iron the fabric, deliver the masks, and manage the website. Plus, community members have also helped out by donating materials (fabric, laundry detergent, elastic, etc.) and donating funds to buy the materials. Mercer Mask Project is starting a new initiative to make hospital gowns, in response to a request from a local hospital, and has started collecting sheets from the community. To volunteer or donate, reach out to their facebook page (Mercer Mask Project) or their website mercermaskproject.com.

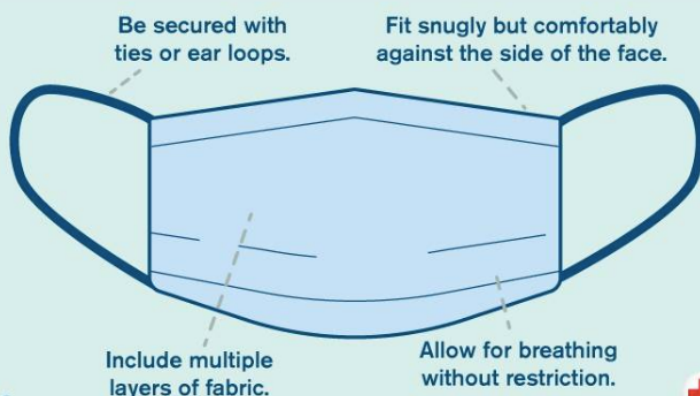


Mask depot in
West Windsor

Quinn and
Grammy
made face
masks for
friends and
family



What to know about face coverings.



Source: CDC



continued next page

Along with the others, an important part of this fight is the **Sourland Mountain Spirits** story. This spirit manufacturer switched to making sanitizers instead of spirits by reducing the alcohol concentration of their beverages and adding hydrogen peroxide and aloe vera. Their sanitizer is completely organic, as well. The company has just delivered 2,000 bottles of sanitizer to Capital Health Medical Center (Hopewell), Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital (Hamilton), Homefront NJ (Lawrenceville), and Quakerbridge Mall's COVID-19 testing center. This delivery was only the first of many, marking a trend in alcohol distilleries switching to creating sanitizers. It's refreshing to know that the local businesses are addressing the needs of their customers and going all out to help out the community.

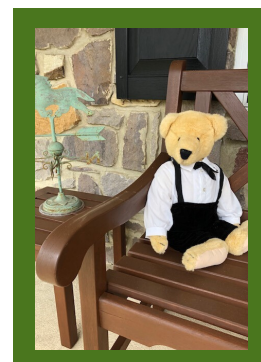
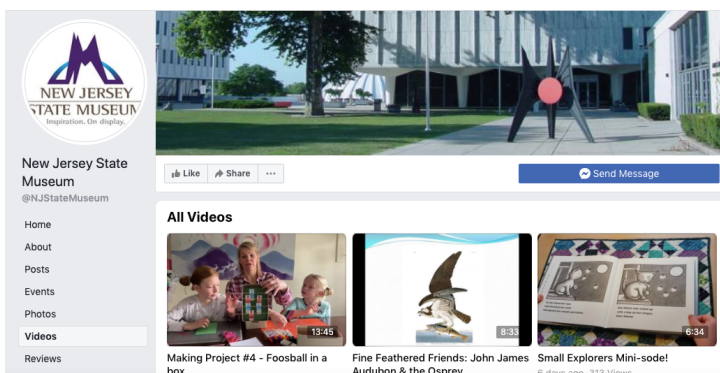


Ray Disch
Founder
Sourland Mountain Spirits
"When life gives you lemons
make lemonade, but that
doesn't work as well against
COVID as our 80% hand
sanitizer"



Check out the **NJ State Museum, and Old Barracks** on FaceBook for virtual tours, how to videos, do-it-yourself projects, and an online version of its popular "Small Explorers Class". They saw the need to help educators teaching from home, and have transitioned to virtual education.

Another project that seems to be making some headway is the **Teddy Bear Hunt**. This is an informal, social project that neighborhoods are taking part in. People put up teddy bears in their window and it becomes a scavenger hunt from there. Kids try to spot as many as they can to make their social distancing a little more bearable, pun fully intended. The goal of this project is to keep young kids entertained as they walk or drive with their families. This little game has been observed in the US, Japan, New Zealand, and other countries across the world. Many people have expanded their horizons from stuffed animals to drawings, little toys, and various other interesting paraphernalia that keeps kids on the street occupied. This game shows how the community has been coming together to help each other get their mind off the pressing concerns of the moment with small gestures like this that represent all of the best qualities of the neighborhood.



How many
bears can you
spot on your
walk through
your
neighborhood?

Don't forget to check out the new virtual options on the **Mercer County Library System** listed on page 3. Last but not least, I would like to mention the **Red Cross** and all of our fantastic medical workers. Blood donation centers across the U.S. are ramping up efforts to collect plasma from people who have recovered from COVID-19 in hopes it could be used to save the lives of others infected with the pandemic disease. An international nonprofit agency focused on transfusion medicine and cellular therapies, and dozens of community blood centers nationwide could become a key source for the century-old treatment known as **convalescent plasma therapy**. The treatment uses blood products taken from people who have recovered from a viral infection and injects them into those still suffering. The experimental practice was used during the devastating 1918 flu, as well as to treat measles in the 1930s. In recent years, plasma therapy has been used to treat victims of Ebola, SARS and H1N1 influenza. The American Red Cross has set up a website to collect information about potential plasma donors. For more information, email: <https://www.redcrossblood.org/donate-blood/dlp/plasma-donations-from-recovered-covid-19-patients.html>

MERCER COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM

MCLS Responds

MCL's YouTube Stats

MCL now has 167 Videos that have been watched 6,100 times, for a total of 202 hours of viewing.

What's New on MCL's YouTube Channel

The library has been adding new videos daily, which are divided into "playlists" covering such topics as: MCL's Virtual Branch Resources, Job & Career, Crafting, Storytime, Science, Cooking, Computer Instruction, Yoga & Meditation, Games, and Short Stories.



**American
Red Cross**

Community of Giving

Blood Drive

The Presbyterian Church of Lawrenceville and Temple Micah

2688 Main Street, Lawrenceville, NJ 08648

Tuesday, April 28, 2020

2:00 pm – 7:00 pm

Appointments are preferred.

Please contact Rick van den Heuvel (609)462-9101
or Mary Kuller (609) 275-4843

Or visit [RedCrossBlood.org](https://www.RedCrossBlood.org) and enter Sponsor Code: **LawrencevilleComm**

Shout-Outs for our Local Heros

from online News at Rider University 4/1/20 by Rachel Stengel

Shortly after New Jersey Gov. Phil Murphy signed an executive order on March 21 to close all non-essential businesses and ordered residents to stay home, Associate Professor Dr. John Bochanski and Jacob Ezzo '14 put their 3D printers into action. Bochanski, chair of Department of Computer Science and Physics, began printing ventilator splitters, which allow two patients to be connected to the same ventilator in case of a shortage. Ezzo began printing and assembling face shields for local members of the medical community. Neither an expert in 3D printing, Bochanski, a Rider physics professor, and Ezzo, the choral director for South Orange Middle School, say they were just trying to do their part to give back during the worldwide public health emergency.



Bochanski with ventilator splitter and Ezzo with face shield, both made from 3D printer.



Elena Cromeyer from **Trenton Health Team** gave a shout out for fellow worker **Mandy Nash**.

"Under the supervision and leadership of Mandy Nash, THT's Health Information Exchange (HIE) Program Manager. We were able to stand up the HIE to register, track and schedule people for COVID-19 testing, at the Mercer County facility, and the first testing site in Trenton. With Mandy at the helm, this was pulled together in a matter of days! We're really proud of this and her!"

Social Worker **Kate Hall** gave a shout out to **Cindy from Sprouts**:

"Here at Elm Court and HBH, we have been receiving the most cheerful flower donations from Sprouts in Lawrenceville. Cindy, the owner, has twice dropped off 20-30 small arrangements of flowers for us to put around our common areas. Even though people are not congregating, it gives residents a lift when they come to get their mail or drop off rent checks, etc."

Princeton Soup and Sandwich has been delivering free meals to healthcare workers at Penn/Princeton Hospital

Professor Ellen Rudowski reported that **TCNJ** also stepped up in response to the coronavirus, sending medical supplies used to teach nursing students isolation techniques in their mock ER lab. They were sent to Capital Health in Hopewell and to the Henry J. Austin Health Center in Trenton.

Those supplies include personal protective equipment like masks, gloves and gowns, the instructors felt are better used than let sit in a classroom closet while in-person instruction is suspended.

Nursing students have helped West Windsor Health Department with Spanish translation services during an interview with confirmed COVID19 positive residents.

TCNJ nursing students are trained MRC volunteers and are manning **Mercer County** phone banks and provided the same assistance for Hamilton Health Department in March.

Shout-Outs for Local Heros continued

Kathy Donalson shared a story of a hero – **Rachael Hammer**, RNC-OB.

Kathy wrote "'I'm sure that this is not the only case of this generosity of time and a labor of love... One of the Labor and Delivery nurses that I used to work with at Capital Health Medical Center-Hopewell is making protective gowns for herself and the **entire OB team** in addition to working part-time and homeschooling her three children. I think that she is terrific and dedicated to the cause."

The **County Executive** also applauded **Café Du Pain** in Lawrence and **Jim Hines**, owner of **Mercer Oaks Catering** in West Windsor, for donating food and beverages for the test site workers all week.

St. Francis Medical Center in Trenton is one of three New Jersey medical facilities whose capacities are being expanded by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Philadelphia District as part of the ongoing response to the COVID-19 Pandemic. Construction to convert portions of St. Francis Medical Center into a 37-bed facility began April 13th. Thank you FEMA, ARMY CORP, and State of NJ.

I know there are countless acts of kindness and professionalism that you have seen above and beyond expectations. **Sasa Montano** from **Meals on Wheels** said there are more stories than time to print - check out their Webpage for all the stories.

I would personally like to honor all of our amazing **Health Officers in Mercer County**. Since this first started in February, they have been working seven days a week 12-16 hour days to keep our loved ones safe. Thank you from the bottom of my heart

In Memory...

We were all so sad to hear that our partner **Darlene Andes** passes away suddenly this month. Darlene worked for Mercer County Division of Health and helped so many of us with our emergency preparedness plans. Her patient, non-judgmental approach, and laugh helped all of us deal with stressful complicated preparedness planning. She recently presented to the GMPHP, a newly awarded grant on Communicable Disease Prevention. We helped connect her to our partners just in time to do education that would ultimately help prevent the spread of COVID-19. Darlene was a Certified Health Education Specialist and she created many curriculums that will be in use for years to come. We relied on her skilled assessments and critics when we practiced an emergency situation, and she will be missed at future drills and exercises, Farewell dear friend.



Darlene training
volunteers
at an emergency
preparedness exercise



NUTRITION AND FOOD SUPPLY



Our partner **Michelle Brill**, FCHS Educator/Associate Professor with Rutgers Cooperative Extension recommended several helpful links on nutrition and food storage during the pandemic.

While we all follow the COVID-19 guidance and stay home to stay safe, we are making fewer trips to the grocery store. It is so important to know how to keep your household food supply stocked with nutritious foods and to know their shelf life. Here are some resources that include lists of what to keep in your pantries and refrigerators as well as safe shopping and food storage tips.

<https://www.choosemyplate.gov/coronavirus>

Also available as a pdf:

<https://choosemyplateprod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/printablematerials/coronavirus.pdf>
<https://extension.uga.edu/story.html.html?storyid=8313&story=Non-perishable-Food>

Also available as a pdf:

https://secure.caes.uga.edu/extension/publications/files/pdf/TP%20109_2.PDF

<https://www.ready.gov/food>

Some of this information relates to power outages and food safety but it also contains a list of foods to stock.

<https://njaes.rutgers.edu/fs1317/> "Healthy Eating in the time of COVID-19"

<https://nutrition.org/making-health-and-nutrition-a-priority-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-pandemic/>



ONE PHONE CALL AT A TIME

Because of the pandemic, our **Greater Mercer Transportation Association RideProvide** program had to be significantly reduced to only dialysis patients receiving rides. For many of our riders, our service was the primary way they could get out and socialize. And, that is why the RideProvide staff has found a way to keep in touch, one phone call at a time. So far, the experience has been good for both the riders and the staff. Riders are very appreciative of having someone checking on them and thankful to have someone to talk to and share a laugh.

The **Princeton Senior Resource Center**, in partnership with the **Greater Mercer TMA** and Ride Provide, is pleased to offer **Safe-4-Seniors Home Delivery Service**. This temporary program is being offered during this crisis so that seniors can receive safe, no contact delivery from local food establishments for a low cost. The pickup and delivery must be within Mercer County, Plainsboro, and the southern portion of Montgomery. Hours for delivery would be between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Subsidized by PSRC, your cost would only be \$5.00 per delivery. Deliveries are limited to within the same town (i.e. Lawrence to Lawrence) or an adjacent town (Princeton to Lawrence). For more information go to: <https://www.princeton senior.org/safe-4-seniors/>

Running Essential Errands

The following information provides advice from the CDC about how to meet household needs in a safe and healthy manner.

Shopping for Groceries and Essentials



- Stay home if you are sick.
- Order on-line or use curbside pick-up

While Shopping:

- Stay at least 6 feet from shoppers and while in lines
- Cover your face and nose with a cloth face covering
- Don't shop during peak hours. Find out if they have special hours for high risk people
- Disinfect the shopping cart handle
- Use hand sanitizer after paying whether with cash, card, or keypad
- After shopping use hand sanitizer. Wash your hands when you get home.
- There is no evidence yet that food or food packaging has been linked to getting sick with COVID-19.

Accepting Deliveries and Take-out



Limit in person contact

- Pay online or on the phone when you order if possible.
- Ask for deliveries to be left in a safe spot outside of your house if possible, otherwise stay at least 6 feet from the delivery person.
- After collecting mail or take-out, wash your hands.

Banking



Bank online whenever possible

- Use the drive through ATM if possible. Use disinfectant wipe on keyboard.
- Use hand sanitizer afterwards, and wash hands once home.

Doctor and Pharmacist



Use the phone or telemedicine to talk with your doctor or pharmacist

- Ask for your doctor's guidance about in person visits when necessary.
- If possible, call prescription orders in ahead of time. Use drive-thru windows, mail-order, or other delivery services.
- See if you can get a larger supply of your medicines so you do not have to visit the pharmacy as often.

GMPHP Greater Mercer
Public Health
Partnership

General Precautions

- Stay home as much as possible - social distancing
- Wash your hands frequently, or use hand sanitizer
- Don't touch your nose, mouth, or eyes
- Stay away from sick people
- Don't share food or beverages
- Clean hard surfaces regularly including door knobs, faucets, cell phones, remotes
- Watch out for your elderly and vulnerable neighbors

What to Do if You are Sick

- Follow all of the precautions listed above.
- Stay home and practice good respiratory hygiene to protect people who live with you
- Take your temperature regularly and follow your doctors instructions.
- Wear a face mask to protect others
- Limit contact with pets and animals.
- Call your doctor if you experience emergency symptoms such as shortness of breath, excessive fever, or have other medical conditions that compromise your health
- Disinfect areas with bodily fluids ie. bathrooms
- Always use reliable sources of information such as the CDC, or NJDOH



<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/steps-when-sick.html>

What is Ahead for Mercer County

We don't have a crystal ball to predict how the corona virus will progress in Mercer County, but we do know how communicable diseases spread, and what other communities have done to mitigate the spread of the Corona virus. Every effort to contain the virus and slow the spread saves lives. These efforts give health systems and all of society much needed time to prepare, and researchers more time to identify effective treatments and develop vaccines. Mitigation efforts in China and South Korea have decreased the number of new cases, and hopefully very soon we will see the same in Mercer County. Prevention measures include:

- Social distancing measures: These include measures for schools, workplaces, and mass gatherings. Cancel gatherings.
- School closures and dismissals: These include temporary closures and dismissals of child care facilities, K-12 schools, and institutions of higher education up to 8 weeks.
- Offer telecommuting and replace in-person meetings in the workplace with video or telephone conferences. Cancel all travel.
- Mass Covid-19 nasopharyngeal screening of symptomatic and some day, asymptomatic people to detect asymptomatic carriers of the virus.
- Antibody tests to determine who is potentially protected and can safely work.

We need to all work together to protect our elderly and vulnerable residents.