

## New York State Cluster Action Initiative (Exec. Order 202.68)

On October 6, 2020, Governor Cuomo announced a new Cluster Action Initiative in New York State (NYS) to address COVID-19 hotspots within a limited and definable geographic area. Working with public health experts, the state developed a science-based approach creating **red**, **orange** and **yellow** zones and to contain these clusters and stop any further spread of the virus, including new rules and restrictions directly targeted at areas with the highest concentration of COVID cases and their surrounding communities. The new rules are in effect for a minimum of 14 days.

**The initiative is composed of three steps:**

- (1) Reduce in-person activities and interactions within the cluster, similar to New York on PAUSE;
- (2) Take action in the area surrounding the cluster to stop the spread; and
- (3) Take precautionary action in the outlying communities.

The Cluster Action Initiative website can be viewed at <https://forward.ny.gov/cluster-action-initiative>. NYS has also created a webpage at <https://covidhotspotlookup.health.ny.gov/#/home> to search specific addresses to determine if they are located within a cluster.

## How Does the Cluster Action Initiative Impact Catholic Health?

The New York State Department of Health (DOH) released a health advisory on October 23, 2020 providing guidance to hospitals and nursing homes regarding the Cluster Action Initiative. *See attached.*

**The NYS DOH confirmed that in the event a new cluster is identified in Western New York there will be the potential to suspend visitation at all Catholic Health facilities based on the following designations:**

**Red Micro-Cluster Zones** require that **all visitation to Catholic Health hospitals and skilled nursing be suspended except for compassionate care and other exceptions currently permitted by our visitation protocols.**

**Orange Warning Zones** that border a cluster require the **suspension of visitation at any Catholic Health facility if a staff member, patient or resident in the facility has tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 14 days, except for compassionate care/other normal exceptions.**

**Yellow Precautionary Zones** require more limited activity restrictions, but do not impact visitation in health care facilities.

Catholic Health supports and thanks Governor Cuomo for his efforts to protect our community. We remain in constant communication with the New York State Department of Health regarding this new initiative. In the event that NYS identifies new clusters of infection within WNY, we will closely monitor these areas and provide further guidance if any of our facilities are impacted.