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## **AS PARTS OF THE STATE REOPEN AND NEW YORKERS LOOK FORWARD TO THE HOLIDAY WEEKEND, LOCAL HEALTH OFFICIALS URGE “CAUTION, REASON AND PATIENCE”**

(Albany, New York) Public health officials representing all of New York State’s 58 local health departments today urged “caution, reason and patience” as regions of the state begin to reopen.

New York State Association of County Health Officials (NYSACHO) Executive Director Sarah Ravenhall said: “With regions reopening and the coming Memorial Day weekend, we urge the public to continue complying with social distancing requirements and limitations that are still in effect, and to proceed with a focus on the data and science, and use caution, reason and patience when determining safe and appropriate reopening actions.

“If we move too quickly, we risk losing all of the gains we’ve made to mitigate the virus, putting all New Yorkers back in harm’s way, and that will only exacerbate and prolong the financial and economic impacts,” said Ravenhall. “This virus can very quickly boomerang on us, backtracking on all the progress that our combined sacrifice has generated.”

In order to best ensure a safe and sustainable reopening, NYSACHO recommends the following elements be part of any reopening strategy:

- Limitations on all large gatherings should be maintained as far as possible into the latter part of the year to avoid super-spreader events and to provide time to evaluate appropriate density limitations to reduce the risk of disease.
- Social distancing and disinfection must continue to be practiced on an ongoing basis, including sharing of any creative solutions and best practices that businesses can employ to protect their customers, employees and the public.
- All counties should continue, and expand as necessary, contact tracing and targeted isolation and quarantines.
- All reopening activities should be coordinated between local, state and regional governments, while still retaining the local health infrastructure and authorities needed to respond quickly to locally emerging public health threats.

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