ACTIVISTS CALL ON GOVERNOR, MAYOR, AND CITY OFFICIALS TO REIMPOSE SOCIAL DISTANCING MEASURES

[NEW YORK, NY] – On Friday, activists from the COVID-19 Working Group-NY sent a letter to Governor Cuomo, Mayor de Blasio, Speaker Corey Johnson, Commissioner Zucker, and Commissioner Chokshi urging them to impose aggressive social distancing measures to mitigate the spread of COVID-19.

Earlier this week, the citywide positive testing rate reached a seven-day average of 2.52 percent, causing Governor Cuomo to implement new restrictions including a 10-person limit for private gatherings and a mandatory 10 p.m. closing time for gyms, bars, and restaurants. But such measures are inadequate to reverse the tide of infections in the city, which are no longer confined to specific neighborhoods.

The COVID-19 Working Group-NY sent a similar letter advocating for immediate scale up of social distancing measures in March of this year before the first round of citywide shutdowns were imposed. Both letters warn that non-pharmaceutical interventions will only prevent deaths if the City acts early.

“If we wait too long to implement these interventions, as the City did in March, we will suffer the same economic and social costs, but many more New Yorkers will die.” James Krellenstein, co-founder of PrEP4All.

Recent studies have demonstrated that indoor dining, gyms, and houses of worship are hotspots for COVID-19 infection. By not acting decisively to close these establishments, City and State officials are needlessly endangering the lives of thousands of people.

Activists recommend urgent interventions including closing gyms, pausing all indoor dining, and doubling testing in New York City to curb the rate of infection. A full list of recommendations can be found here: https://bit.ly/32KBTMS. They also recommend implementing a color-coding alert system to enable business and residents to plan for an uncertain future.

This spring, the failure of City and State officials to scale up aggressive physical distancing measures cost the City thousands of lives. Our governments must now demonstrate that they have learned the lesson from those early months and act now so that we can prevent unnecessary deaths in the future.


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