



St. Lawrence County Public Health Department

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Press Release

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Strong Collaboration with Four Area Colleges for Safe Reopening

Canton, NY— St. Lawrence County Public Health Department and Board of Health have worked very closely with the 4 area colleges (Clarkson University, St. Lawrence University, SUNY Canton, and SUNY Potsdam) to create the safest possible plans for returning students. The goal of this collaboration has been to assist the Colleges in reopening in a manner that protects the health and safety of the students and safeguards the community members of St. Lawrence County.

All 4 Colleges have implemented comprehensive testing programs to decrease the possibility of a student arriving to campus with COVID 19, and to rapidly identify any infected student during the school year. The testing programs are using the latest and most accurate testing techniques – either molecular or RT-PCR methodologies. Several cycles of testing are scheduled to help rule out any active infections with the arriving students. Additionally, testing will be done throughout the semester as part of a surveillance program. These testing programs were not mandated by New York State, but reflect the 4 College’s commitment to the safest possible plan to ensure the health of their students, faculty, staff and community members of St. Lawrence County.

The Public Health Department receives testing results and begins the case investigation when the individual has been notified by their health care provider. With regular communication to student health centers and area providers, investigations begin as soon as possible—often before the results are available in the New York State reporting system. Positive test results for students from the 4 colleges will be counted by SLC. At times there may be a slight delay in posting the positive results due to the NY State reporting system, however the Public Health Department receives the information directly from the local health care provider and contact tracing and interventions start immediately. Each college has set up a COVID-19 dashboard or information page to track their case status. Please visit the Associated Colleges of St. Lawrence Valley website for a link to each college’s webpage at:

<https://associatedcolleges.org/return-to-campus/>

In addition to comprehensive testing programs, each campus has modified their operations to promote the 5 pillars of prevention – mask use, physical distancing, handwashing, isolation of those who are sick, and reduced travel. All campuses will be carefully following every detail of New York State Department of Health and Department of Education guidelines concerning a safe reopening plan. The Colleges have made significant commitments and investments reflecting their interest in remaining strong partners in our community’s efforts to progress toward a healthy and safe fall season.

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