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Dear Residents,

I want to thank everyone for continuing to abide by the social distancing measures and face covering guidance set by the State of New Jersey in order to reduce the spread of COVID-19. Our diligence, dedication, and care for others is what will work to slow the number of new cases within our communities. The Bernards Township Health Department has been working day and night to protect the residents of all our communities from COVID-19. We need everyone to remain vigilant and stay the course to come out on the other side of this pandemic intact.

As the weather begins to get warmer and the days get longer, I still encourage you to get outside and take advantage of the sunshine and fresh air. However, summer time is not the time to relax our social distancing measures. Many states have experienced a spike in COVID-19 cases and even some new outbreaks in our own state. While our summer won't be the typical peaceful break from work and school that we usually have, the work we can do together is vital.

Many of you may already know that Governor Murphy has postponed the reopening of indoor dining in New Jersey. While this is small setback, it is to protect the residents of New Jersey. **Please continue to support** our local restaurants by taking part in outdoor dining when comfortable and ordering takeout. Have patience and kindness when patronizing these businesses. They are working hard to adapt to new policies, cleaning procedures and face covering rules. They may take longer to prepare your meal as they have more ground to cover by going outside and must abide by social distancing and cleaning guidelines in the kitchen.

An effective vaccine is many months away. Keep yourself healthy by getting enough sleep, drinking plenty of water, exercising daily, and eating a balanced diet. Stay home if you are sick, except to get medical care and avoid close contact with people who are sick. When in public stay 6 feet away from others and avoid large gatherings. Wear a face covering when in public and especially if you are indoors anywhere but your home. Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and carry hand sanitizer that is at least 60% alcohol based. Disinfect frequently touched surfaces and bring disinfecting wipes when going out. Keep travel to a minimum, but if you do plan to go, stay advised of the 14 day quarantine travel advisory for several states [here](#).

Getting tested to protect yourself and your loved ones is a significant step as we reopen and begin to see more people on a daily basis. You could have COVID-19 and not know it. If you have symptoms, have been in close contact with someone who tested positive, are an essential worker, or were recently in a crowd where social distancing was hard to maintain, you should get tested. Learn how and where to get tested at [covid19.nj.gov/testing](https://www.covid19.nj.gov/testing).

Contact Tracing has been and will continue to be an effective method of reducing the spread of COVID-19. If you are contacted, it is because you either tested positive for COVID-19 or have been in close contact with someone who has – so it's critical you answer the phone. Contact tracers are calling with life-saving information. Learn how contact tracing saves lives at [covid19.nj.gov/testandtrace](https://www.covid19.nj.gov/testandtrace).

During a worldwide pandemic it's easy to feel like so much is out of our control. We at the community level have the ability to prevent new outbreaks and keep ourselves healthy and safe. Have a happy and safe 4th of July weekend. Stay well and thank you for your continued cooperation in keeping you, your family and community safe from COVID-19.

Sincerely,
Lucy A. Forgione, MS, MCHES
Health Officer/Director of Health