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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. We have all made sacrifices to stay home to keep ourselves and our loved ones safe. Many states have experience a spike in COVID-19 case 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.

An effective vaccine is many months away. For now the best way to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the community is to abide by the current guidelines set forth by the New Jersey Department of Health and Centers for Disease Control.

- Keep yourself healthy. Get enough sleep, drink plenty of water, exercise daily, and eat a balanced diet.
- Stay home if you are sick, except to get medical care. Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid large gatherings and crowds. Stay 6 feet away from others. Keep traveling to a minimum.
- Wear a face covering when in public and especially if you are indoors anywhere but your home. If you're unsure if you need your face covering, take it with you just in case and have extras.
- Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, as often as possible. Carry hand sanitizer that is at least 60% alcohol based.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces. When going out bring disinfecting wipes.

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 that will keep you, your loved ones, and your community safe and healthy. 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. ***Continue to keep your heads up, staying alert and keeping in line with current guidelines.*** 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