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POLONCARZ ADMINISTRATION REFUSES TO RELEASE INFORMATION ON COUNTY EMPLOYEE COVID CASES

Health Department silent on multiple COVID cases of workers that entered county buildings

(ERIE COUNTY, NY) – Erie County Comptroller Stefan I. Mychajliw, Jr. called on Health Commissioner Dr. Gale Burstein to answer questions about multiple positive COVID-19 cases of Erie County employees. In a letter sent to the Poloncarz Administration, Comptroller Mychajliw highlighted many concerns about unreported COVID cases among county workers.

There was also another request of additional information concerning health and safety protocols after previous questions went unanswered. The Comptroller's office was alerted to the positive tests of county employees by workers that called the Comptroller's Whistleblower Hotline.

"Erie County allows anyone entering buildings to come in without health screenings. Temperature checks are not being done. County workers are scared. Many reached out through our Whistleblower Hotline. I've asked the Health Department many times for simple answers. They refuse. The public has a right to know. The Poloncarz Administration has a history of shouting from the rooftops about confirmed COVID cases across Erie County. They are silent and secretive when it happens within the walls of Erie County government," said Comptroller Mychajliw.

Among the questions asked of the Poloncarz Administration and not yet answered:

- What are the dates and times when the individual that tested positive for COVID was in the building at 460 Main Street?
- When did the COVID-19 test come back positive to the County of Erie and the Erie County Health Department?
- How much time elapsed between knowledge of the positive COVID test at 460 Main Street and when staff was notified?
- When were all clients or non-county workers notified of this positive COVID test?
- When did contact tracers begin the process of tracking this specific case?
- Have contact tracers notified all people that were inside 460 Main Street now that a positive COVID case has been confirmed?
- Is testing, rapid or otherwise, being provided to employees, clients and guests who were at the building recently?

- When is the County of Erie notifying the public about this positive COVID test?
- What is being done to reach out to any employees, clients and anyone who may have entered the building?
- Why has the news of this positive COVID test remain a secret, when the county has been quite vocal about previous positive COVID cases across the community?
- What preventive measures are being put in place considering county employees, and others, can be in close proximity of one another and utilize shared spaces like elevators, conference rooms and restrooms?
- What is the plan to contact trace all the people that visited HEAP, Probation, etc.?
- What is the risk of cross contamination of anyone working at 460 Main Street and the Rath Building?
- Will the County of Erie now take temperatures of any individual entering county buildings?
- How many confirmed COVID-19 tests have there been among the county workforce?
- How many positive COVID cases have there been of employees working in the Rath Building?
- What is your plan to test those that came in contact with these two positive cases?
- Is there a plan to increase health screenings in light of these case(s)?
- Why isn't the County of Erie taking temperature checks for any person entering a county building?

"It is odd how quick the Poloncarz Administration announces positive COVID tests elsewhere. When it comes to Erie County government, those cases are shrouded in secrecy. Why is that? Workers and taxpayers have a right to know if they are risking their health and lives entering a county building. The dark cloud of secrecy and defiance is concerning," concluded Comptroller Mychajliw.

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