



STEFAN I. MYCHAJLIW

ERIE COUNTY COMPTROLLER

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Contact – Office of Erie County Comptroller, 854-8400

CONCERNS OF UNREPORTED PARKS WORKER COVID CASE

Report to Comptroller Whistleblower hotline highlights secrecy among Erie County employees COVID cases

(ERIE COUNTY, NY) – Erie County Comptroller Stefan I. Mychajliw, Jr. is once again raising serious concerns about whether the Poloncarz Administration followed proper protocol with COVID positive county employees.

The Erie County Executive already publicly apologized for serious lapses within the Erie County Health Department in notifying people whether or not they tested positive for COVID-19. There is also a massive backlog of the Poloncarz Administration’s contact tracing program where close contacts of positive COVID cases are not being contacted at all by the county.

Now additional concerns are being raised about the Poloncarz Administration’s mismanagement of cluster cases amongst Erie County employees. A complaint was registered with the Comptroller’s whistleblower hotline concerning a COVID-19 case involving a parks employee. The complaint stated that a worker assigned to Wendt Beach recently tested positive for the virus. A relative of that worker, also a parks employee, was then sent from Wendt Beach to Chestnut Ridge Park amongst other workers, even though they exhibited symptoms similar to being infected with COVID-19. The Comptroller notified the Parks Commissioner advising him of the very serious situation and requesting steps be taken to safeguard the county workforce.

“The Poloncarz Administration blames the public for the spread of COVID-19. Mark Poloncarz believes shutting down our community, closing schools, crippling businesses, and limiting church attendance will stop the spread. Now we know gross incompetence of the Poloncarz Administration is to blame for mismanaging the coronavirus crisis. County employees and the public are at risk because of bureaucratic incompetence,” said Erie County Comptroller Stefan Mychajliw.

As for the whistleblower complainant, they state the transferred parks worker was overheard saying everyone should stay away from them. County workers were reportedly not provided any guidance, and in fact were told not to say anything according to the whistleblower.

“If true, that county employees were ordered to keep quiet and weren’t given proper instruction or protection, then the Administration failed miserably again protecting the workforce and public. We are beginning to see a trend. Healthy people are being put at risk by the Poloncarz Administration’s mismanagement of the COVID crisis,” added Comptroller Mychajliw.

The employee exposed to COVID-19 is reportedly still on the job this week. Comptroller Mychajliw demands more transparency from the Poloncarz Administration regarding the handling of COVID cases among county workers.

“Protecting the public should be a top priority. Unfortunately, the Poloncarz Administration is more focused on punitive shutdowns that destroy families,” concluded Comptroller Mychajliw.

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