



# Jefferson County PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE

Public Health Facility, 531 Meade Street, Watertown, New York 13601

For Immediate Release

**PRESS RELEASE**

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## **Jefferson County Collaborating for a Safer, Healthier Graduation**

**June 4, 2020-** Jefferson-Lewis-Hamilton-Herkimer-Oneida BOCES (BOCES), Jefferson County school officials and Jefferson County officials, including the public health department have been working collaboratively to address graduation activities that are in accordance with NYS orders and guidelines during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The group has been proactively working together to address this important milestone in a young person's life. The County has made recommendations on ways that schools can celebrate the class of 2020, while taking into consideration public health concerns, social distancing recommendations, and NYS-issued restrictions on social gatherings. While developing innovative interventions to continue to mitigate COVID-19, the schools and the community have guidelines and laws that must be adhered to. At this time NYS is only allowing gatherings of 10 or fewer people.

"Executive Order 202.10, as later extended by Executive Order 202.18, Executive Order 202.29 and as extended and amended by Executive Order 202.32, which prohibited all non-essential gatherings of any size for any reason, except for any religious service or ceremony, or for the purposes of any Memorial Day service or commemoration, which allowed ten or fewer individuals to gather, provided that social distancing protocols and cleaning and disinfection protocols required by the Department of Health are adhered to is hereby modified to permit any non-essential gathering of ten or fewer individuals, for any lawful purpose or reason, provided that social distancing protocols and cleaning and disinfection protocols required by the Department of Health are adhered to."

While everyone understands that virtual or drive by graduations are not what is wanted by school staff, parents or students, it is imperative to continue these social distancing measures in order to mitigate COVID-19 and allow for future reopening phases.

As you personally consider your participation at graduation activities, keep in mind the safest option is to stay at home particularly if you are in the at-risk groups. Consider the following guidance to have a safer, healthier graduation:

- Stay home if you are ill or have been exposed to COVID-19.
- Maintain a distance of at least 6 feet (in-person or in cars with windows down).
- Wear a face covering when you cannot maintain a distance of 6 feet.
- Do not have physical contact with anyone outside of your household (no hand shaking, hugs, etc.).
- Do not have social gatherings afterwards. (see Executive Order above)
- Wash hands or use hand sanitizer.
- Disinfect all surfaces.

~END~