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### PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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August 28, 2020

As per the press release (below) issued today by the State University of New York, Chancellor Jim Malatras is taking swift action to stop the recent spike in cases of COVID-19 among students of SUNY Oneonta.

As of today, 20 students at SUNY Oneonta have tested positive for COVID-19. City of Oneonta Mayor Gary Herzig states, "It is very troubling to hear that at least 20 of the young people here in the City of Oneonta have become sick with a potentially dangerous disease. I wish them all a speedy recovery. I am very appreciative of the immediate response and assistance from Chancellor Malatras. I welcome his visit to Oneonta next week and look forward to working in partnership with Chancellor Malatras and President Morris in doing whatever it takes to keep our students and permanent residents healthy. This should serve as a wakeup call to both young and old on how easily this virus can spread and the need to restrict social gatherings."

### **Chancellor Jim Malatras and President Morris Agree to Test Every Student Using Pooled Surveillance Testing at SUNY Oneonta Campus Following First COVID-19 Cases**

*Chancellor Malatras Deploys SUNY and Upstate Medical University Supplies and Personnel to Facilitate Testing Every Student Over the Next Three Days; To Train Campus to Administer Testing Over the Semester*

*Photos from the Start of Testing Available [Online](#)*

**For Immediate Release: Friday, Aug. 28, 2020**  
Contact: Holly Liapis; [Holly.Liapis@suny.edu](mailto:Holly.Liapis@suny.edu); 518-320-1311

**Albany, NY** – State University of New York Chancellor Jim Malatras today sent SUNY and Upstate Medical resources to accelerate pooled surveillance testing of all students at the SUNY Oneonta campus after a number of students tested positive for COVID-19. SUNY's Health and Wellness director and Upstate Medical University personnel have been deployed to facilitate testing every student over the next three days. Upstate Medical will also train campus to administer further testing over the semester.

"Today is the perfect example of how the entire SUNY community can work together and take aggressive action to control COVID-19. We must ramp up testing at SUNY Oneonta immediately, which is why I am sending personnel and resources to quickly pinpoint any other positive cases and isolate those with the coronavirus quickly," **said Chancellor Malatras**. "We are using every measure to keep our campuses safe. I want to thank SUNY Oneonta President Morris for her leadership,

Upstate Medical for their innovation and support, and our dedicated SUNY System Administration staff for their tireless effort.”

Chancellor Malatras is expected to visit the campus next week to get a report on cases and review all reopening plans in place.

**SUNY Oneonta President Barbara Jean Morris said**, “We are grateful for SUNY’s support in fast-tracking implementation of pool testing on at SUNY Oneonta. Being able to conduct hundreds of tests daily will give us a more complete picture of the virus in our population and will help contain it. Because of our commitment to safeguarding the health and wellbeing of our campus as well as the Oneonta community, we have made testing mandatory for students.”

**Oneonta Mayor Gary Herzig said**, "I want to thank Chancellor Jim Malatras for his commitment to the health and safety of SUNY Oneonta students. By implementing pooled surveillance testing, SUNY is taking every precaution at its disposal to protect both these students, and the people they come into contact with around our city. By all of us working together, I am confident we can keep both our students and year-round residents safe and healthy.”

**Mantosh Dewan, MD, Interim President of SUNY Upstate Medical University said**, "We are pleased to support SUNY Oneonta’s reopening with the saliva-testing protocol we have developed here at SUNY Upstate Medical University with our Start Up New York partner, Quadrant Biosciences. The work of keeping our students safe on campus is important as New York responds to the COVID pandemic."

Earlier this summer, SUNY was approved by the New York State Department of Health to undertake pooled surveillance testing for COVID-19—an innovative method where numerous samples can be run as part of one test. SUNY's pooled testing approach was developed and validated by SUNY Upstate Medical University and Quadrant Biosciences, and will use saliva samples, pooled in batches as small as 10 samples and as large as 25 samples.

The pooled testing allows for about 10-25 people to be screened in one test. The testing can be done using saliva rather than by swabs that are inserted in a patient’s nose. Individuals administer the tests themselves, swabbing their mouths for 10 or 15 seconds each, and provide the saliva samples to medical personnel.

Their samples are combined into one, which is tested for coronavirus. A negative test means that all 10-25 people in the group are presumed at the time to be coronavirus-free. A positive test for the pool would mean every person in that group would need to be individually tested by a PCR test. The pooled saliva testing simplifies sample collection processes, making it feasible to collect samples at a large scale and during a short period of time.

As of today, approximately 20 students have tested positive for COVID-19 at SUNY Oneonta. SUNY Oneonta is investigating reports of social gatherings that may have contributed to the recent cases and will take swift disciplinary action against any student or student organization that has violated the student code of conduct of City of Oneonta ordinance. The college already interim suspended a sorority alleged to have hosted an event that violated the Greek code of conduct.

SUNY Oneonta began fall classes this past Monday. Most are being offered fully online, but some courses will mix online and in-person learning. Labs and classes that rely on hands-on activities will take place in larger spaces to reduce density. All in-person instruction ends after Thanksgiving break, with the all classes shifting to an exclusively online model through December 15. Both residence and dining halls implemented protocols to limit density and promote social distancing, and no guests are allowed in dormitories. Two residence halls with a total of 160 beds will be offline for quarantine and isolation. Students and campus employees must participate in routine screenings and must wear face

coverings on campus in spaces where social distancing is not possible. If an employee or student tests positive for COVID-19 on campus campus-wide email will be sent.

### **About the State University of New York**

The State University of New York is the largest comprehensive system of higher education in the United States, and more than 95 percent of all New Yorkers live within 30 miles of any one of SUNY's 64 colleges and universities. Across the system, SUNY has four academic health centers, five hospitals, four medical schools, two dental schools, the state's only college of optometry, and manages one US Department of Energy National Laboratory. As of Fall 2019, more than 415,500 students were enrolled in a degree-granting program at a SUNY campus. In total, SUNY serves about 1.3 million students in credit-bearing courses and programs, continuing education, and community outreach programs. SUNY oversees nearly a quarter of academic research in New York. Research expenditures system-wide exceeded \$1.7 billion in fiscal year 2019, including significant contributions from students and faculty. There are three million SUNY alumni worldwide, and one in three New Yorkers with a college degree is a SUNY alum. To learn more about how SUNY creates opportunity, visit [www.suny.edu](http://www.suny.edu).