

Mayor's Update

Current Cases

There are 559 Newton residents who have tested positive for COVID-19 through Thursday evening, May 30. The great news is that because of the disease mitigation efforts by so many of us in Newton and statewide, we are seeing fewer new cases each week. Last Friday (4/24), we reported 516 cases – so we had an increase of 43 cases this past week. Two weeks ago (4/17), we reported 406 cases, an increase of 110 cases that week.

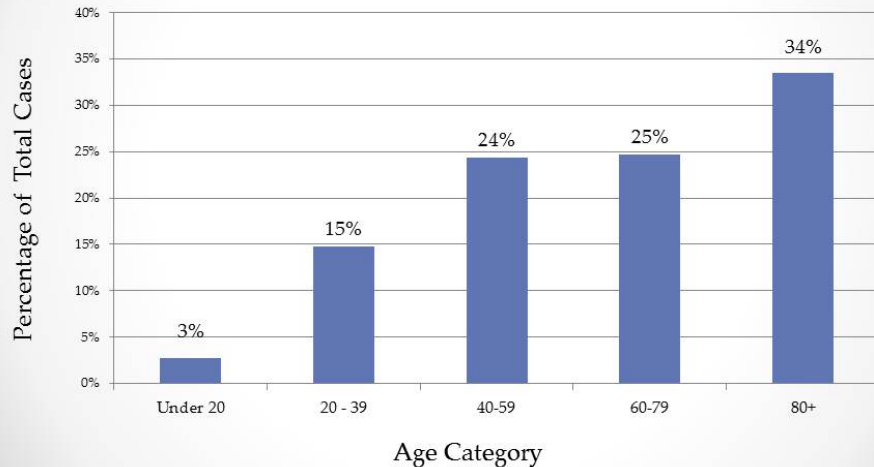


Those of you following the case counts daily on [our website](#) may have noticed something unusual yesterday. Our positive case count was 559 on Wednesday but went down yesterday to 553.

How did our positive cases go down? Two things happened simultaneously. First, a number of cases that were originally assigned to Newton but were actually residents of other towns were reassigned by the state to their actual city/town of residence. Second, we are seeing a lower number of new cases each day. Therefore, yesterday, even with some new positive cases, we had even more reassigned so the total number of Newton cases decreased. Reassignments have happened before; however, in those instances, we had more new cases than reassigned ones so our overall number didn't go down. This may happen again. So, please keep in mind that our data reporting reflects what we know on any given day.

If you're interested in diving into more Newton COVID-19 data, a periodic update is available on [our data webpage](#). It includes two tables showing the sex and age ranges of confirmed cases in Newton. Approximately 59 percent of cases in Newton are female, whereas statewide a smaller percentage – 55 percent – are female. Looking at the age breakdown, 34 percent of our positive cases are more than 80 years old and 25 percent are among people 60 to 79 years old.

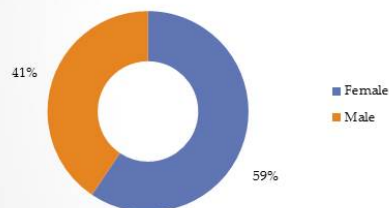
Newton Cases by Age Category



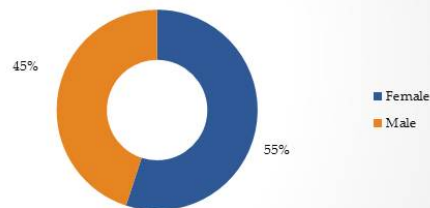
4/28/2020

Cases by Sex*

Newton Confirmed Cases by Sex



Massachusetts Confirmed Cases



*When sex is unknown, it is omitted in both Newton and Massachusetts reporting.

4/28/2020

There are three additional tables on the Newton website containing information reported earlier this week about our positive cases: the long-term care/assisted living percentage (42%), the percentage of people who are no longer isolated (56%), and a chart showing Newton's cumulative deaths among people who have tested positive for COVID-19 (71).

We expect to periodically make this additional information available. We will also archive the previous charts on our data webpage.

The most useful picture of how things are looking in Newton continues to be our symptom onset graph which you can find [here](#). To learn about what's happening statewide, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) has [data here](#).

A little over two weeks ago, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) began reporting COVID-19 data by city or town on a weekly basis as a part of its [data dashboard here](#).

MDPH also began reporting not only the positive case count but also the “rate” or the number of cases per 100,000 people. The rate provides a standardized way to compare the burden of disease in cities and towns relative to the size of their population.

Looking at the rates reported over the last three weeks allows us to see how positive cases of COVID-19 have changed in Newton compared to other municipalities in Massachusetts, both those with particularly high rates as well as neighboring cities and towns.

The three charts below show municipalities ranked by their rates in descending order with the highest rate of cases as #1. As you can see, Newton has gone from having the 71st highest rate two weeks ago, to having the 84th highest rate one week ago, and then to having the 104th highest rate this past Wednesday, April 29. (There are 351 municipalities in Massachusetts.)

**Confirmed COVID-19 Cases in MA by City/Town
January 1 - April 14**

Rank in MA	City/Town	Count	Rate
1	Chelsea	712	1890
2	Brockton	1202	1223
3	Randolph	367	1072
4	Williamstown	74	1004
5	Lawrence	814	923
6	Everett	444	914
7	Longmeadow	128	825
8	Braintree	308	782
9	Revere	470	771
10	Norwood	229	760
18	Boston	4609	663
34	Weston	56	504
43	Waltham	298	447
55	Cambridge	471	417
63	Needham	114	388
71	Newton	337	367
72	Somerville	280	365
80	Framingham	263	353
87	Watertown	110	331
122	Wellesley	75	252
148	Brookline	144	223
State Total		28163	487

**Confirmed COVID-19 Cases in MA by City/Town
January 1 - April 22**

Rank in MA	City/Town	Count	Rate
1	Chelsea	1447	3841
2	Brockton	1763	1794
3	Everett	716	1475
4	Randolph	481	1405
5	Lynn	1387	1374
6	Lawrence	1205	1366
7	Topsfield	76	1300
8	Revere	759	1245
9	Holyoke	474	1150
10	Danvers	316	1106
17	Boston	6744	970
26	Waltham	542	813
60	Cambridge	672	595
62	Weston	66	594
63	Framingham	438	588
72	Wellesley	164	551
75	Somerville	415	542
77	Needham	156	532
84	Newton	455	496
87	Watertown	163	491
139	Brookline	216	335
State Total		42944	616

Confirmed COVID-19 Cases in MA by City/Town January 1 - April 29			
Rank in MA	City/Town	Count	Rate
1	Chelsea	1965	5217
2	Brockton	2735	2783
3	Everett	1004	2068
4	Lynn	2056	2037
5	Randolph	643	1879
6	Lawrence	1639	1858
7	Revere	1123	1843
8	Danvers	467	1635
9	Topsfield	87	1488
10	Stoughton	401	1449
15	Boston	9284	1335
25	Waltham	748	1122
29	Framingham	816	1095
63	Watertown	273	822
77	Somerville	573	748
78	Needham	217	740
80	Weston	80	721
85	Cambridge	773	685
95	Wellesley	187	628
104	Newton	553	602
160	Brookline	263	408
State Total		60265	865

Wear a Face Covering

Governor Charlie Baker announced today that everyone over the age of 2 is required to wear a face covering in public places where physical distancing is not possible.

Why? Physical distance is the best way to reduce the transmission of this disease. However, there are times when physical distancing is hard or even impossible to maintain. When that is the case, wearing face coverings reduces the risk of people unwittingly infecting others.

The Governor's order is good news. Whether you are in Newton, Boston, Brookline, Needham or any other community, all of us will need to wear a face covering inside grocery stores, pharmacies, when picking up take-out orders, and (once we reopen the economy) at other retail establishments. We must wear one when using public transportation including commuter rail trains, trolleys and subway trains, buses, ride shares and taxis. Indoors or outside, when physical distancing is not possible, the new rule is we must wear a face covering.

Please keep a face covering handy when you are walking, biking or jogging; if you cannot maintain six feet of distance between you and someone else, put it on.

While this order is officially effective Wednesday, May 6, please start right now. As this announcement only came a few hours ago, we'll use the next few days to work out the enforcement process in Newton.

Are there any exceptions? Yes. People who are unable to wear a mask or face covering due to a medical condition are exempted and they do *not* need to produce documentation verifying the condition, according to the Governor's order.

Be forewarned: A business may decline entry to an individual who refuses to wear a mask or cloth covering for non-medical reasons, per Gov. Baker's COVID-19 Order No. 31.

I also want to highlight that using medical-grade masks to comply with this order is highly discouraged.

Don't have a face covering? It's easy and inexpensive to make one. Watch this [video](#).

I also want to repeat a sentence in the Governor's Order about face coverings. "... The Department of Public Health continues to urge all residents of the Commonwealth to limit activities outside of the home ...". Read the Governor's order [here](#).



Need a Place to Self-Isolate or Self-Quarantine?

Need a place to go to self-isolate or self-quarantine? Homewood Suites by Hilton – Boston/Needham, just over the border from Newton at 200 1st Avenue in Needham, has rooms available for people whose housing situations do not allow them to self-isolate or self-quarantine at home during the COVID-19 crisis.

Each suite has a kitchen, living room and a king or two queen beds. They are available at a 10% discount for Newton residents. Complimentary “breakfast to go” bags are delivered each morning.

If you need a room or more information, reach out to the Emily Mandeville, Director of Sales and Marketing, at Emandeville@claremontcorp.com, or call her directly at 339-793-1919. You can also reserve a room online at:

https://secure3.hilton.com/en_US/hw/reservation/book.htm?ctyhocn=BOSNEHW&corporateCode=0002654903&from=Inrlink

Hotel: Homewood Suites by Hilton Needham Boston

Company Name: LOCAL NEIGHBORHOOD

Or click [here](#) and type 0002654903 in the corporate account line.

We reached out to two other Newton hotels, the Boston Marriott Newton and Four Points by Sheraton Boston Newton, but they do not offer rooms for people self-isolating or self-quarantining at this time.

You can call the Newton Health and Human Services at 617-796-1420 for information about available community supports.

Newton COVID-19 Care Fund Update

A wonderful group of Newton community leaders, in partnership with United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack Valley and Family ACCESS, established the [Newton COVID-19 Care Fund](#) on March 20, just six weeks ago.

Since that time, over 900 individuals, businesses, nonprofit organizations, and philanthropic foundations have donated over \$650,000 to help families and individuals who have been financially impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Rob Gifford, the chair of the Fund’s fundraising committee, recently spoke with Jenn Adams of NewTV to share an [update on the Fund](#). We are so grateful to Rob, the fundraising committee, and all of the donors for their generosity and commitment to the members of our Newton community who are hurting financially.

The Fund’s [Application for Assistance](#) went live on Friday, April 3. In the past 28 days, Family ACCESS has moved swiftly and nimbly to support the many individuals and families seeking assistance:

- 272 applications have been submitted
- 120 applications have been approved to date
- \$220,000 has been paid out on behalf of applicants to pay bills for basic necessities such as utilities, rent/mortgage, childcare, health care, and other critical needs
- On average, \$1,700 in total has gone out on behalf of each applicant (there is a maximum benefit of \$2500 per individual/family)

Family ACCESS’s administrator of the Fund recently shared a quote from a 77-year-old Newton resident who received assistance:

“On March 13 I lost my part-time job due to the coronavirus. My rent is very expensive, and my small social security check does not even cover it. I was feeling very anxious about both my rent and a current medical bill. The Newton Senior Center connected me with the fund. The Fund administrator was very helpful. She

listened and cared and treated me with respect. She is very knowledgeable about the local resources. She processed my application and both the rent and medical bill were accepted. I felt as if a huge lump was removed from my chest and no longer felt anxious. I was then able to concentrate on working very hard to follow all corona suggestions and stay well. So far, I am healthy!!”

We know many have deep need in Newton right now. Our City’s social workers as well as non-profit organizations such as the Perpetual Benevolent Fund, Cousens Fund, Saint Vincent de Paul, Newton Food Pantry, Centre Street Food Pantry, and Riverside Community Care are encouraging individuals who meet eligibility requirements to apply to the Fund for relief.

If you are looking for assistance from the fund, click [here](#).

If you wish to make a donation to the fund, click [here](#).

More Resources

A new non-emergency text line for victims of crime was launched by Middlesex County District Attorney Marian Ryan. It provides direct access to advocates that can help victims navigate the criminal justice system and access resources such as emergency shelters and rape crisis counseling. Victims in non-emergency situations can text back and forth with an advocate in the District Attorney’s Office without having to say a word – a valuable tool for people who may not be safe talking out loud and for people who prefer texting to phone conversations. Victim Witness Advocates can be reached by texting 781-281-4066, 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

This can also be a particularly difficult time for people struggling with addiction. The Massachusetts Substance Use Helpline offers up-to-date information about programs [here](#). The Newton Health and Human Services Department provides information for those struggling with addiction [here](#).

Warmly,

Ruthanne

P.S. To all the people working through this crisis to keep us healthy and safe, provide us with food, prepare our prescriptions and maintain essential services, thank you. It’s fitting to say thank you on International Workers Day (May 1).

P.P.S. A draft of Newton’s 2020-2027 Open Space and Recreation Plan is posted [here](#) for a two-week public review period, ending on Thursday, May 14. A City Council Zoning and Planning Committee Public Hearing is also scheduled on Zoom for Thursday, May 7. (Find the meeting link [here](#).) Give us some feedback by sending your comments to concom@newtonma.gov.

