

## Mayor's Update

### Current Cases

Six hundred and ninety nine (699) Newton residents have tested positive for COVID-19 through Sunday evening, May 17, according to preliminary data. This is an increase of 10 people since Thursday evening, May 14, when we last reported in an email noting 689 positive cases. The preliminary cumulative counts from the weekend were 693 people testing positive through Friday evening, May 15 and 699 people through Saturday evening, May 16. Newton's cumulative case count is updated weekdays at [www.newtonma.gov/covid19data](http://www.newtonma.gov/covid19data).



### Starting to Reopen

Today Governor Baker detailed the first of the four-phase plan for reopening the Commonwealth.

The "Start" phase begins today. In addition to the essential services that have remained open, as of today, manufacturing, construction and worship are now permitted to reopen.

Next Monday, May 25, lab and office space, limited personal services (including hair salons and barbers, pet grooming and car washes) and retail stores can open (with curbside pick-up and remote order fulfillment). You can read more about each phase [here](#).

All of these openings are predicated on businesses and houses of worship meeting new Mandatory Workplace Safety Standards (you can read them [here](#)) as well as Sector Specific Protocols for manufacturing and construction ([here](#)) and worship ([here](#)).

Before reopening, businesses must self-certify and complete a checklist that they will operate in compliance with the new safety standards and protocols. These checklists do not have to be filed with the City of Newton, but need to be available at the place of business and posted where they can be viewed by employees and customers. Enforcement will scale from verbal consultation and redirection, to written redirection, to fines, to cease-and-desist letters and, if necessary, court injunctions.

Our Health and Human Services staff, our department heads and our lawyers are looking closely at all these state guidelines; while there may be areas where we differ from the state recommendations as we move forward, so far Newton will open according to the Governor's plan.

I will continue to pay close attention to the data about the spread of the virus, particularly the number of hospitalizations and number of people in the ICU due to COVID-19. These are important indicators, and even slight or subtle increases may cause the Commonwealth to pivot and slow openings or reimpose restrictions.

## Safer at Home

This has not been an easy time for any of us. But our collective sacrifice has flattened the curve, slowed the spread of this virus, and helped us get to this point where we are ready to slowly and responsibly start to reopen.

While we have slowed the spread of this highly contagious virus, it has not been eliminated. Everyone still has a responsibility to “Do our job.” What’s our job right now? Wash our hands, wear face coverings, keep 6 feet from others, and stay home if we don’t feel well.

Warmly,

Ruthanne



P.S. What tremendous generosity we’re seeing by people here in Newton. Literally hundreds of us have made donations of time, money and resources to help our neighbors during this health and economic crisis. Thank you to each and every one of you. Today I’m wearing a fanciful hand-made face covering made by Jasna Pecnik, just one of the people who is helping keep us safe and whole.

