

## Mayor's Update

### Current Cases

There are 749 Newton residents who have tested positive for COVID-19 through Thursday, May 28, the preliminary data shows. This is an increase of three people since May 27.



We have some interesting new data to note as the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) recently added additional [city/town specific data](#) about people who have been tested for COVID-19.

According to this data, Newton's rate of positive COVID-19 tests is 14.1 percent (a.k.a., the "positivity rate"). This means that of the total number of Newton residents tested for COVID-19 (5,290 people), 14.1% of those were positive (749 people). Newton's 14.1% is a bit below the statewide average of 17.0%.

Rates per 100,000 people are helpful for comparing data across cities and towns that have much different populations. Comparing Newton's case count of 749 people to a much larger or much smaller community doesn't provide as much understanding of how widespread the disease is until the data is equalized by the community size by calculating a rate per 100,00 people.

MDPH provided the positivity rates per capita across the Commonwealth. This information shows Newton's rate of confirmed positive cases per 100,000 people is significantly lower than the statewide rate (812 vs. 1,352 per 100,000 people).

Source: MDPH*	Newton	Massachusetts
% of Positive Tests	14.1	17.0
Residents Tested per 100,000 people	5,767	7,925
Confirmed Cases per 100,000 people	812	1,352

*\*MDPH clarifies in its data set that "these numbers and rates reflect the number of persons tested, not the total tests performed, by city/town. One person may have multiple tests."*

How does Newton's positivity percent compare to some other communities? Waltham is at 23.7% and Boston is at 23.3%. Needham is at 16.5%, Wellesley 16.2%, and Watertown 16.0%. Brookline is exactly the same as Newton at 14.1%. Cambridge comes in at 9.6%.

### **Positivity Rate**

**Newton 14.1%**

Waltham 23.7%

Boston 23.3%

Needham 16.5%

Wellesley 16.2%

Watertown 16.0%  
Brookline 14.1%  
Cambridge 9.6%

While we have closely tracked confirmed COVID-19 cases, the release of this data by MDPH is the first time we have information that helps us understand how many people in Newton have been tested. To take you back to elementary school fractions – until now, we have been missing the denominator, or the total number of Newton residents who have been tested for COVID-19.

Current guidance suggests people with COVID-19 symptoms and people who are close contacts of someone confirmed to have COVID-19 should be tested. There are numerous testing sites within Newton and our surrounding communities. Click [here](#) for testing information or contact your healthcare provider or a local urgent care site.

We encourage Newton residents to seek testing if they think they may have the virus.

One additional note about this data. It only includes cases confirmed by PCR testing. (PCR tests use a sample of mucus from a person's nose and are the ones used to diagnose people who are currently sick with COVID-19; PCR stands for polymerase chain reaction.) This data does not include antibody tests. The difference is PCR testing looks for the presence of virus currently in the body whereas antibody testing looks for antibodies produced later as a result of exposure to the virus.

The MDPH data report is available [here](#).

## **City Hall Reopening**

I'm happy to announce that Newton City Hall is scheduled to reopen to the public:

Appointment Only on Monday, June 15  
Open in Full on Monday, July 6

Like all reopening plans in Massachusetts, the data will influence the timetable. Thus, these dates for reopening of Newton City Hall are contingent upon the COVID-19 health data continuing to show encouraging indicators that the virus' spread is being slowed.

Working with Commissioner of Health and Human Services Deborah Youngblood and City Department heads, we are instituting a number of changes and new protocols to help ensure the health of employees and the public as we reopen. Some of the more notable changes include:

### *Maintaining Physical Distance of 6 feet or More*

- Departments that interface with the public on a regular basis at counters or windows will have in place a physical barrier between employees and the public with a means to exchange papers. Departments that are currently set up without counters but instead greet the public via a staff member and a front desk, such as the Mayor's Office, will have modifications made to their physical set up that creates appropriate physical distancing and/or physical barriers as needed.
- Elevators will be limited to one person at a time unless people are in the same

household.

- Floor markings will be set up outside of departments where there is sometimes a line demonstrating 6 feet of distance.
- Signs reminding people to physical distance (and to wear face coverings) will be placed throughout City Hall.

### *Face Coverings*

- Face Coverings will be required to be worn by both employees and the public whenever maintaining 6 feet of distance is not possible (which includes all the public places in City Hall). Notably, the State order on face coverings includes a medical exemption.
- For City Hall employees, cloth face coverings will be provided.
- Signs reminding people to wear face coverings (and practice physical distancing) will be placed throughout City Hall.

### *Hand Hygiene*

- Employees will be washing their hands often with soap and water or using hand sanitizer.
- Hand sanitizer will also be provided both in offices and throughout City Hall for the public and for employees.
- Signs will be placed throughout City Hall reminding people to wash hands or use sanitizer frequently.

### *Health Monitoring*

- Employees will monitor their health.
- Staff will be actively encouraged to stay home if they feel unwell.
- Any employee who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 will be contacted by the public health authorities in their home town/city and told how to manage their well-being and protect others. Likewise, employees and the public who have been determined to be a close contact of someone with a COVID diagnosis will be notified by the public health authorities and told how to manage their well-being and protect others.

### *Public Access Remotely*

- All Departments will continue to implement ways to make it easy and convenient to do business remotely.

### *Cleaning*

- Regular cleaning and disinfecting will be done with special attention to high touch surfaces.

Thank you for your patience while City Hall remained closed. We have worked hard to continue to serve you even while we had to change many of our usual ways of doing so. We will continue to strive to provide excellent and timely service with amplified attention to health and safety in our people's house.

### **Newton Outdoor Dining – “Newton Al Fresco”**

Our restaurants are a critical part of what makes Newton special and they have been suffering dramatically during the COVID-19 emergency.

Governor Baker's announced today a phased approach to reopening restaurants beginning the week of June 8<sup>th</sup> with outdoor dining only. We have been working to implement a series of steps to help facilitate this in a quick and thoughtful, safe manner in Newton.

Starting next week, we will begin placing picnic benches in parks and municipal parking lots near restaurant concentrations to provide outdoor take-out dining spots as the weather gets nicer. Next week we also expect to receive approval from our Licensing Commission for a global waiver to allow restaurants to use either their own parking lots or adjacent sidewalks for table service in strict accordance with the state's safety standards.

Right now, restaurants not already licensed to do so would not be able to serve alcohol. Efforts are underway, however, at the State House to speed up approvals for restaurants to serve alcohol in outdoor settings.

We are also examining the possibility of closing entire street segments and/or allowing restaurants to use portions of public parking lots and street parking meter locations as part of our "Newton Al Fresco" efforts. Stay tuned and feel free to give us your ideas as we look to support our restaurants.

The restaurateurs, the City Council, and the Newton-Needham Regional Chamber have been wonderful collaborators as together we find ways to help restaurant employees and proprietors as well as give all of us a safe and healthy way to re-emerge from our home cooking.

Are you running a restaurant and have questions? Reach out to Nicole Freedman at [nfreedman@newtonma.gov](mailto:nfreedman@newtonma.gov) or Devra Bailin at [dbailin@newtonma.gov](mailto:dbailin@newtonma.gov)

### **Newton COVID-19 Care Fund Final: Deadline for Applications Friday, June 5**

A wonderful partnership established the Newton COVID-19 Care Fund on March 20<sup>th</sup> as a short-term emergency fund to help families and individuals who have been financially impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

After weeks of closely monitoring the fundraising, application submissions, and distribution of funds to people in need, the **Fund has decided to close the application process for seeking assistance at the end of the day on Friday, June 5, 2020.**

Need assistance? To apply to the fund, click [here](#). All applications received by the deadline of Friday, June 5 will be considered. (If you have already applied and you have questions about your application status, please contact your individual Family ACCESS case worker or email [NCReferrals@familyaccess.org](mailto:NCReferrals@familyaccess.org).)

Through a special partnership between a dedicated group of Newton community members, United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack Valley, and Family ACCESS, the Newton COVID-19 Care Fund has raised over \$700,000 to date. Thanks for this generosity goes to over 1,000 individuals, businesses, nonprofit organizations, and philanthropic foundations.

In the eight weeks since the application for the fund went live on Friday, April 3, Family ACCESS case workers and administrators have worked with dedication, care and kindness to support the many individuals and families seeking assistance:

- 232 households or individuals have received financial support to date
- \$447,326 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
- 105 applications are currently still in process with the team at Family ACCESS

The [website](#) for the Fund will remain active through June 30 to continue to accept [donations](#) to meet the needs of the final round of eligible applicants. Those involved with the Fund remain committed to monitoring closely the current crisis and are prepared to spring back into action if needed.

On behalf of our residents, people who work in Newton, families with children in school in Newton and City of Newton First Responders, I am deeply grateful to all who have stepped up in this time of need to lead, administer or donate to the Newton COVID-19 Care Fund at a time our people needed it most. The COVID-19 pandemic continues to take a heavy toll and we will continue to work with community partners to support the health and wellbeing of the Newton community even as the Fund winds down.

### **Heartbreak and the Boston Marathon**

Well, it's official. The 124<sup>th</sup> running of the Boston Marathon, already rescheduled from Patriots Day to September 2020, has been cancelled for this year. This is a disappointing decision, but it's the right one.

All participants who were originally scheduled to race are invited to participate in a virtual Marathon the week of September 7 - 14. Spectators hungry for their annual dose of elite running will also have an opportunity to participate in a series of virtual activities and events during September's Boston Marathon Week.

What does this mean for Team Newton? The City of Newton is awarded 40 bibs annually which we distribute to Newton athletes who run for Newton charities. The funds raised by these athletes support programs and services for our friends, neighbors, students, and social service providers. With an already uncertain financial landscape, these funds are even more essential this year.

I'm so glad our runners will be continuing their fundraising efforts and, if able, running the virtual course. Because needs are especially high in this unusual and difficult year, if you had planned on supporting a Newton runner or charity, please do so if you're able. If you've already donated, thank you, thank you. Check out Newton's runners [here](#).

### **Two 9-Day Closures on the Green Line**

The MBTA is taking advantage of this period of low ridership and the "safer at home" advisory to accelerate repairs on the Green Line D-Branch track and signals. They are closing the line between Riverside and Kenmore stations for two 9-day work periods in June and providing shuttle service instead. The two nine-day closures are expected to cut 162 days off the project's timeline, bringing it from 37% complete to 72% complete in June alone.

The project, which does include noisy work adjacent to Newton neighborhoods and village centers, will modernize and improve service along the Green Line. The upgrades are designed to make service through Newton more reliable, faster, safer, and, when there are failures, response times faster. Over 21,462 feet of running rail

will be replaced as well as turnouts, switches and signal equipment.

Free shuttles will run from Riverside to Kenmore, stopping at Newton's Green Line stations, from Saturday, June 9 through Sunday June 14, and then from Saturday, June 20 through Sunday, June 28. There will also be Express shuttles between Riverside and Woodland to Copley during the traditional hours when we used to have weekday rush hours(!).

Get more information about the closures [here](#).

### **Flattening the Curve of Racism**

Stay at Home advisories do not flatten the curve on racism. Our country is raw as we again witness the tragedy of black lives lost to racism. Now, more than ever, we must hear the voices of people of color, especially who do not feel safe, and we must stand by their side. At this difficult hour, we in Newton stand together and reaffirm our commitment to our core principles of diversity, respect and acceptance. An act of racism towards one is an act of hatred towards us all.

Warmly,

Ruthanne

P.S. It's a bittersweet day. For many, it's good news that this week hair salons and barbershops in the Commonwealth began to reopen. But, Pat Fronduto, the beloved 89 year old proprietor of Stan's Salon on Walnut Street at Four Corners, made the decision to close his barbershop for good. Pat is a beloved and respected barber and friend to generations of Newtonians. In honor of his 50 years of serving this good City, I thought it only fitting and proper to proclaim today, May 29, 2020 as Pat Fronduto Day in the City of Newton.

Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
City of Newton



PROCLAMATION

- WHEREAS:** Pasquale "Pat" Fronduto is a living institution to generations of Newtonians who have visited his barber shop on Walnut Street; and,
- WHEREAS:** At the tender age of 16, Pat brought the old-fashioned personal and respectful barbering skills from the hilltop town of San Sossio Baronia, Italy to the Garden City of Newton via a stop at the Hotel Somerset on Commonwealth Avenue; and,
- WHEREAS:** Pat numbers many athletes, politicians and celebrities among his clientele at Stan's Salon, but equally values everyone and any son brought by a caring parent for a first haircut; and,
- WHEREAS:** At the age of 89 and celebrating the shop's fiftieth year in 2020, Pat has made the difficult decision to turn off his red, blue and white striped lamp for the last time; and,
- WHEREAS:** Pat will remain a beloved and respected barber and friend to so many in Newton folks who will continue to cherish both his camaraderie and skill; now,

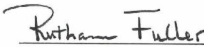
**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:**

that I, Mayor Ruthanne Fuller, on behalf of all the residents of the City of Newton, commend Pasquale "Pat" Fronduto for his lifetime of dedication to the Newton community as a beloved presence who will be missed by many; and,

I hereby proclaim May 29, 2020

**Pasquale "Pat" Fronduto Day**

in the  
City of Newton

  
Ruthanne Fuller  
Mayor

P.P.S. Want to help record the history of Newton during the time of COVID-19? Newton Community Cameras, a collaboration between the City of Newton, Newton Community Pride, and Historic Newton, is your chance. Submit still photos taken in Newton, with a description of their significance, and submit to this contest. All photos submitted will be archived at Historic Newton for the future. From the submissions, twenty will be selected to be part of a public exhibition at the City Hall Galleries. More information and a link to submit photos can be found [here](#).

P.P.P.S. We won't be able to gather in person, but we'll still be raising the Pride Flag next Tuesday, June 2 at 6 p.m. Join us virtually that night at [newtonma.gov/2020pride](http://newtonma.gov/2020pride) to celebrate and take pride in our LGBTQ+ community. This year Amit Paley, CEO and Executive Director of the Trevor Project and a former Newtonian, will be speaking. (The Trevor Project is an extraordinary suicide prevention organization for LGBTQ youth.) Show your #NewtonPride

# Pride Flag Raising Ceremony

Show your  
#NewtonPride  
by hanging a  
rainbow or  
pride flag in  
your window!

throughout the month with a rainbow or pride flag  
in your window!

Watch the ceremony LIVE  
at 6:00 pm on  
[newtonma.gov/2020pride](http://newtonma.gov/2020pride)

NEWTON HUMAN  
RIGHTS  
COMMISSION

