

Mayor's Update

The number of new cases of COVID-19 across Massachusetts is rising, as is the number of people hospitalized because of the virus. Since Labor Day, 55 days ago, there's been a 278% rise in cases across the Commonwealth and a 145% rise in hospitalizations, according to Gov. Charlie Baker earlier today.



Here in Newton, our cases are also rising and currently stand at 1,139 confirmed COVID-19 cases through yesterday, Nov. 1. One hundred and fifty (150) Newton residents tested positive for COVID-19 during the month of October, the second highest month of cases since the pandemic began.

We must change the trajectory. By taking steps now, we can protect in-person education for students. We can protect our businesses. We can protect our hospitals from being overwhelmed. We can prevent another total shutdown. Most importantly, we can save lives.

I support the targeted restrictions Gov. Baker announced today to slow the spread. These go into effect this Friday, Nov. 6, at 12:01 a.m.:

- Face Covering Order Expanded: Everyone over the age of 5 is required to wear a face covering over their mouth and nose when in public locations, whether indoors or outdoors, *regardless of whether they are able to physically distance from others*. This includes walking or running on sidewalks or in parks, bicycling, or riding in cars with non-household members. People with medical conditions that prevent wearing a face covering are exempt from this requirement. The order allows fines of up to \$300 per violation.
- Stay-at-Home Advisory 10 p.m. to 5 a.m.: People are urged to stay at home between 10:00 p.m. and 5:00 a.m., except for necessary activities including work or going to the grocery store, pharmacy or gas station.
- Early Closure of Business Activities: Certain businesses, facilities, and activities (in-person dining, liquor stores, movie theaters, sports venues, gyms, and others) must close their premises to the public each day from 9:30 p.m. until 5:00 a.m. Restaurants must end table service at 9:30 p.m., although take-out service can continue later. All alcohol sales will be also be prohibited after 9:30 p.m.
- Gatherings Sizes Reduced: Gatherings of people at private residences from different households (including at Thanksgiving) are limited to 10 indoors and no more than 25 outdoors. Indoor gatherings at event venues and in public settings are limited to a maximum of 25 people. Outdoor gatherings at event venues and in public settings are limited to a maximum of 100 people in lower risk communities (cities and towns that have not been designated in the "red" category in any of the last three weekly Department of Public Health weekly reports), and a maximum of 50 people in communities that do not qualify as

lower risk. The new rules do not apply to religious activities or political gatherings.

You can read Gov. Baker's order on face coverings [here](#), early closures [here](#) and gathering sizes [here](#).

We know more now than we did in the Spring. We know face coverings work. We know physical distancing works. We know hand hygiene works.

The Governor made the right decision at the right time to try to keep us healthy as well as to allow us to re-open schools and nurture the economy. I know this is hard, and, yet, we need to change the trajectory of this disease. We can do this.

Warmly,

Ruthanne

P.S. For those who haven't already voted early by mail or early in-person, polls are open in Newton tomorrow from 7:00 a.m. until 8:00 p.m.

