

## Health and Human Services Advisory Council

Date: December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2020

Time: 5:30PM

Location: Due to the Covid-19 pandemic and to protect staff and public health, this meeting was conducted by Zoom meeting.

### Minutes

#### 1. Situational Summary

##### a. data review

Cases as of 12.7.20

Newton: 1,634 Cases (12.4.20)

- 154 deaths, most of whom have pre-existing conditions.
- In the month of November there were 444 (27% of total) new cases within Newton.
- 78 of November's cases (18%) have been associated with colleges and universities, and 152 (9.3%) of total cases since the start of the pandemic.
- 921 total queries responded to via the Call log since its inception in March.
- 65 total emails responded to via the compliance app.

Massachusetts: 250,022 Cases (+2,463)

- 10,793 (+30) deaths with an average age of 81
- 58,452 estimated active cases.
- Positive tests have been around 5.46% for the past week (up from 1.86% a month ago).
- The 7-day moving average for deaths (39) are up 44% compared to two weeks ago (27), but are still down 78% from their peak in April (174).
- The number of hospitalized confirmed cases (1,516) is trending upward, up from 502 a month ago.

Nationwide: 14,636,914 Cases (+174,387)

- New daily cases are rising in 42 states, and recorded U.S. cases are up 8% compared to two weeks ago.
- Total deaths nationwide are 281,253 (+1118).
- 200,625,579 total tests have been reported to the CDC with a 8% positivity rate.

## 2. Discussion of Pandemic Response

### a. Support of Schools, City departments, residents and community partners

#### Update on MA Vaccine Distribution

- The federal government allocated Massachusetts 59,475 doses of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine for this first shipment that is part of 300,000 doses that the CDC is expected to send to Massachusetts by the end of December. These vaccines will be distributed to essential healthcare workers and Long-Term Care Facilities.
- The first allotment of 300,000 COVID vaccines will be for the first dose of a two dose regimen.
- Working closely on promoting public health risk mitigation strategies for all city departments and schools
- Working with businesses, answering questions, providing support, responding to non-compliance

#### Addressing Food Insecurity

- Governor Baker has announced over \$4.7 million in grants to address urgent food insecurity for Massachusetts residents. This funding is being awarded as part of the fifth round of the new \$36 million Food Security Infrastructure Grant Program.
- This funding will aid critical investments in technology, equipment, capacity, and other assistance to help local food producers, especially in the distribution of food insecure communities.
- Baker has also announced the COVID-19 Command Center's new food program for isolating and quarantining individuals in collaboration with local boards of health and the Community Tracing Collaborative (CTC). This program will invest nearly \$1.2 million to support residents in isolation with securing food and other resources.
- Grab and Go meals
  1. Demand for Grab and Go Meals increased greatly the end of April and has steadily increased since then. Nearly 12,000 meals were served the week of 11/23.
  2. 273,780 total meals served from 4/30 to 11/30.
  3. \$306,639.00 total meal cost through 11/30.

### b. Partnership with Newton Wellesley Hospital

Regular meetings on capacity and strategies

Safety net testing for employees and vulnerable residents

### c. Testing

Abbott BinaxNOW COVID-19 Testing Initiative & Stop The Spread Update

- Governor Baker also announced the distribution of the first round of Abbott BinaxNOW tests for use in K-12 schools providing in-person instruction. 175 million tests were procured by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and are being allocated on a per capita basis to states. Phase 1 of this testing initiative will reach 134 public school districts, charter schools and special education schools across the state by December 1st.
  - The BinaxNOW Rapid initiative offers rapid antigen testing in a school setting to students or staff that exhibit any symptoms of an illness consistent with COVID-19 as well as to students or staff who exhibit minimal symptoms (e.g., runny nose, isolated headache, isolated fatigue). Schools must also obtain parent/guardian consent prior to administering tests to students.
  - The Baker-Polito Administration will also increase testing capacity and locations to provide more access for residents in every county. This plan includes five new Stop the Spread (STS) locations and 3 new Project Beacon testing sites. The state plans to collect 110,000 COVID-19 tests per week representing a 50% testing increase for state-financed and organized testing sites alone.
- d. Colleges and Universities
- Weekly meetings with BC, DPH, CTC, Boston PH and Newton HHS to track cases, provide feedback on containment strategies.
- e. Flu clinics
- 2,122 people have been vaccinated as a part of Newton's Fall 2020 Flu-Clinics.
  - This includes 369 children, 1508 adults, and 245 older adults (65+).