

Monday, Dec. 28, 2020

Mayor's Update

COVID-19 Updates and Losses

We had 237 new positive COVID-19 cases among Newtonians over the past 10 days (Dec. 17 to yesterday, Dec. 27), bringing the cumulative total of confirmed cases in Newton to 2,171 since we reported the first five cases in Newton on March 15.

This has been a long ten months in Newton. We saw a peak in April with 506 people who tested positive, and, distressingly, we are on pace to be near or above that number of our neighbors infected in December.



Over the most recent two-week state tracking period from Dec. 6 – Dec. 19, we had 302 new confirmed COVID-19 cases in Newton. The Newton incidence rate is 23.5, slightly down from the 24.9 during the previous reporting period. Of all Newton residents who were tested for COVID-19 during this reporting period, 1.44% of them tested positive (a.k.a., the positivity rate). This metric is higher than the 1.27% reported last week, which compares to a statewide positivity rate of 6.28% during the same two-week period. (More up-to-date information will be available on Thursday; the data reporting is a bit off schedule.)

COVID-19 in Newton	
Total Cases	2,171
Total Deaths	162
*As of 12/28/20	

Newton remains in the yellow group as classified by the state. Five of our neighbors - Boston, Brookline, Needham, Weston and Wellesley - are also designated as yellow, while Waltham continues to be in the red category with a positivity rate of 4.80%.

As Gov. Baker said last week, “Our hospitals are now under significant pressure, and we're heading toward another period, this holiday stretch, where we're likely to see another significant increase in cases and hospitalizations unless everybody plays a very different game than the one we all played at Thanksgiving.”

We need to act differently for New Year’s. The data in the chart below is alarming to see. With the exception of the one awful day in April with 59 new cases, over the last week or so our new case numbers are quite similar to those we saw during our peak in April.

Newton COVID-19 Cases



The pain and loss COVID-19 wrecks has taken no holiday. Two more of our neighbors died over the past 10 days with COVID-19, bringing our grim total to 162 Newton residents.

How should we celebrate the promise of a vaccine and a new beginning in 2021? Celebrate in person only with people in your households. Take advantage of all our technology to celebrate with those who sleep under a different roof – phones, the internet, Facebook and Zoom to ring in a healthier and happier and safer year ahead.

Newton Public Schools Data

Eleven new cases of COVID-19 were reported among people in the Newton Public Schools community, bringing the cumulative total since the start of school to 101 people. The update posted Dec. 24 includes reports of 6 new cases among students learning in person, 2 among staff working in person and 3 Distance Learning Academy/remote learning students. Due to the school break, the next school dashboard update will be posted the week of Jan. 4, 2021. The full dashboard table with data by week is available [here](#).

Two Affordable Homeownership Units for Sale

Two affordable home ownership opportunities in Newton are available for qualified applicants.

Households with an annual income at or below 80% of the area median income (AMI) are eligible to apply. (For example, a 1-person household at 80% AMI has an

annual income of \$67,400 and a 2-person household at 80% AMI has an annual income of \$77,000.) There is also a household asset limit of \$75,000 for both units.

The first opportunity is a one-bedroom, one-bathroom 528 square foot condominium in the Crystal Lake Manor Condominium, 75B Norwood Avenue, Unit 11. This condo is priced at \$209,210, with a monthly condominium fee of \$323.75. Off-street parking is available with the unit. A Down Payment/Closing Cost Assistance Grant of \$10,000 may be available to eligible applicants. While the original deadline for applications has passed, no eligible applicant was identified. Applications will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis. Click [here](#) to learn more and/or download the application. Questions? Email Malcolm Lucas, City of Newton Housing Planner, at mlucas@newtonma.gov.

The second is a one-bedroom, one-bathroom 750 square foot garden-level condominium with a deeded parking spot in the Covenant Residences on Commonwealth Condos, 27 Commonwealth Avenue, Chestnut Hill. This unit is priced at \$196,380, with a monthly condominium fee of \$224. Pets are allowed with some restrictions. Click [here](#) to find out more and/or download the application. Questions? Email Jennifer Shaw at jennifer.shaw@metrohousingboston.org.



(Photo: We recently installed a historic marker in the small triangular park at the corner of Washington and Watertown Streets in West Newton Square, next to Sweet Tomatoes Pizza. It brings to life the village's rich heritage of innovation in education, civic leadership and transportation. Learn more at Historic Newton's history sign webpage [here](#). You can also click [here](#) for a guided walking tour of the people and events that

shaped West Newton. For example, education reformer Horace Mann held meetings here and lived nearby on Chestnut Street. Pictured with me are City Councilors Andrea Kelley, Pam Wright and Julia Malakie, Historic Newton Executive Director Lisa Dady, Laura Foote who researched and coordinated the project, and graphic designer Ellen Weinberger.)

Vaccine Scams

Heed the warning from the Federal Bureau of Investigation and our Interim Police Chief Howard Mintz about COVID-19 vaccine scams.

Don't be fooled by a phone call, an email or ad on social media in which:

- You are asked to pay out-of-pocket to get a vaccine

- You are asked to pay to get early access to vaccine
- You are asked to pay to get your name on a vaccine waiting list

Protect yourself by never giving out your personal information or credit card information to unknown sources.

Here's to a happier and healthier 2021,

Ruthanne

P.S. The Newton Center for Active Living (NewCAL) Working Group is studying design options for the new facility which will be sited at the current Newton Senior Center at 345 Walnut Street in Newtonville. Come to the next virtual NewCAL community meeting, Tuesday, Jan. 5, at 6:30 p.m., to hear options that include adapting the existing senior center as well as building an entirely one. The Zoom telephone number for the meeting is 1.646.558.8656, the meeting ID is 896 7001 0704, and the Passcode is 685885. Find the Zoom link and more information about the project [here](#).



P.P.S. This winter when it's more important than ever to get out of the house and into the fresh, albeit sometime frigid, air, Newton Community Education (NCE) has a

new class with tips and tricks for keeping yourself and your kids warm in any winter weather for any activity. Layer Up: Tips and Tricks for Stay Warm Outside is offered online on Thursday, Jan. 7, noon – 1:00 p.m., for \$5. Sign up [here](#). Check out other new classes offered this winter by clicking [here](#) to see the kids winter course catalog and [here](#) for the catalog of adult classes.



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