

Mayor's Update

COVID-19 Updates and Losses

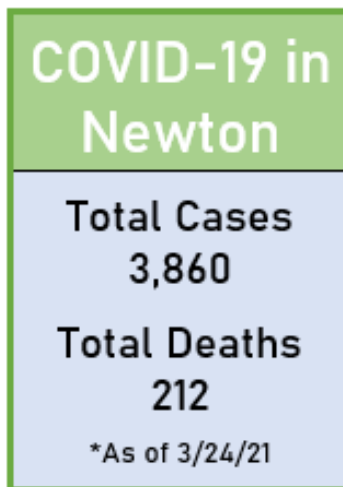
Newton Cases

We had 85 new confirmed cases of COVID-19 over the past week from March 18 – 24, the same number of cases reported last week and 10 more than the 75 reported two weeks ago. These new cases bring our cumulative total number of Newtonians who have tested positive to 3,860.



Over the two-week tracking period used by the State from March 7 to March 20, Newton had 156 cases compared to 141 cases during the previous two weeks, and 169 during the reporting period prior to that.

Our incident rate in Newton continues to stay relatively steady at 12.2 cases per 100,000 this week, a bit higher than last week's 11 and a small improvement from the 13 reported two weeks ago.



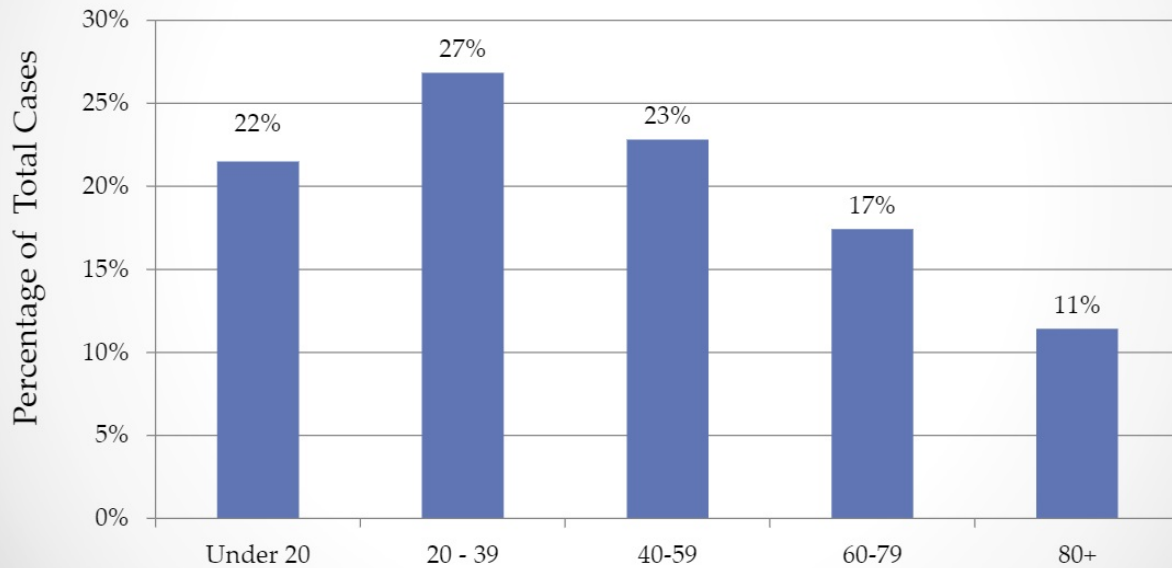
Newton's positivity rate is also holding relatively steady with .53% of the 31,949 tests administered to Newton residents over the past two-week reporting period coming back positive. Last week it was 0.46%. The statewide positivity rate is now 2.01% (with 1.2 million tests performed during this reporting period).

The Boston College community this week accounted for 30% of the cases in Newton over the two-week reporting period. They accounted for 30% of our cases when we reported last week and 19% during the week before that. Boston College posts its COVID-19 case data [here](#).

The numbers from Boston College may reflect what Gov. Baker said today is happening statewide – cases are growing fastest among people 30-years-old and under.

See Newton's data from 3/6/21 below:

Cases* by Age Category



Age Category

3/6/2021

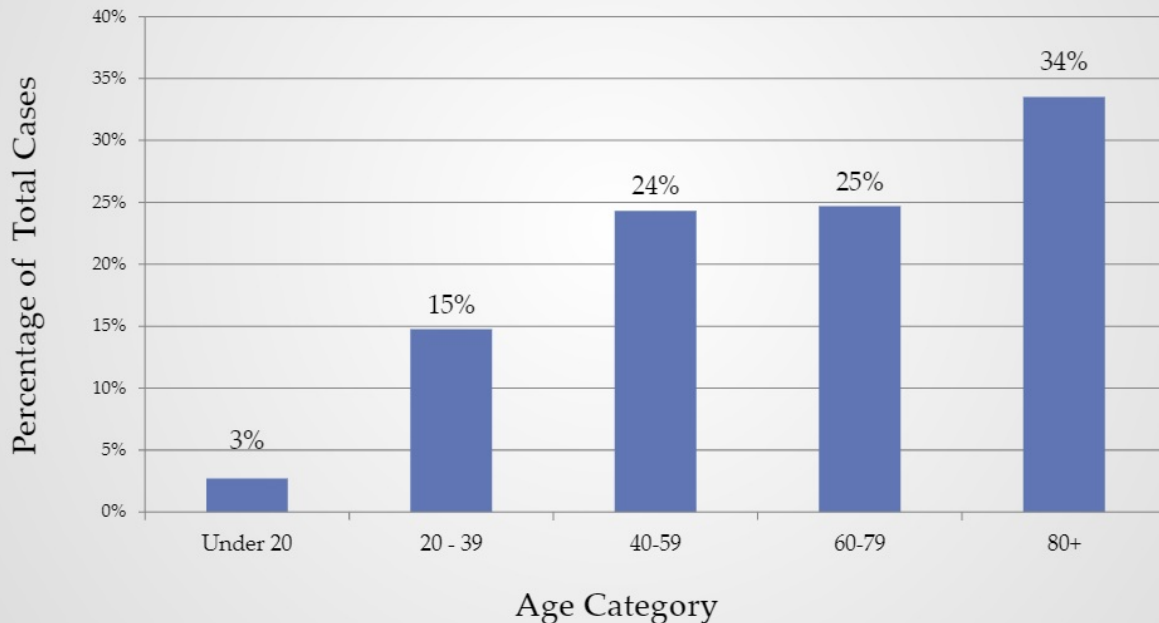
*Cumulative confirmed COVID-19 cases among Newton residents

I took a look at the same chart from April 28, 2020 when Newton had already suffered 71 deaths.

As you can see at that time, early in the pandemic, the cases skewed heavily toward our older residents.

See Newton's data from 4/28/20 below:

Newton Cases by Age Category



4/28/2020

Losses

This week we lost another four Newtonians who died with COVID-19. We have now lost 212 family members, friends and neighbors from our 13 villages over the past year. The end of the pandemic may be coming into focus, but we are still surrounded by grief and loss.

Vaccines for Our Homebound

Newton's Health and Human Services Department is one of the 168 local cities and towns that will be providing vaccines to those that are homebound.

Who is eligible?

The In-home vaccination program has a strict set of criteria that must be followed by Newton HHS nurses. The individual must be homebound and have considerable difficulty and/or require significant support to leave the home for medical appointments, require an ambulance or two-person assistance to leave the home, and/or are not able to leave home for medical appointments under normal circumstances.

The City has been able to provide some of these vaccinations for our homebound residents already but we're dependent on the State to provide additional vaccine. If you or your loved one meets these criteria, please leave a message at 617-796-1666. Someone will call you back to confirm eligibility and schedule an appointment when vaccine is available.

Vaccination Update

This week's State vaccination information shows that 34,329 Newtonians have had at least one dose. Also, 23% of Newton's population is now fully vaccinated and another 14% is partially vaccinated. (A week ago, we were at 20% and 13% respectively.)

The chart also shows the age of those who have been vaccinated. Newtonians who are partially or fully vaccinated include 95%+ of those who are 75+, 90% of those 65-74 years old, 47% who are 50-64 years old, 37% who are 30-49 years old, 19% that are 20-29 years old, and 2% who are 0-19 years old.

To look at the detailed vaccination information for each city and town in Massachusetts by age, sex, race and ethnicity, and zip code, click [here](#).

When is someone fully vaccinated?

According to the CDC, people are considered fully vaccinated:

- 2 weeks after their second dose in a 2-dose series, such as the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines, or
- 2 weeks after a single-dose vaccine, such as Johnson & Johnson's Janssen vaccine

If you've been fully vaccinated, what is the CDC's advice?

- You can gather indoors with fully vaccinated people without wearing a mask.
- You can gather indoors with unvaccinated people from one other household (for example, visiting with relatives who all live together) without masks, unless any of those people or anyone they live with has an increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19.
- If you've been around someone who has COVID-19, you do not need to stay away from others or get tested unless you have symptoms. (If you live in a group setting, the recommendation is that you should still stay away from others for 14 days and get tested, even if you don't have symptoms.)
- You should still take steps to protect yourself and others in many situations, including wearing a mask, in public settings, when gathering with unvaccinated people from more than one other household, and when visiting with an unvaccinated person who is at increased risk of severe illness or death from COVID-19 or who lives with a person at increased risk.
- You should still avoid medium or large-sized gatherings.
- You should still delay domestic and international travel. If you do travel, you'll still need to follow CDC requirements and



recommendations.

- You should still watch out for symptoms of COVID-19, especially if you've been around someone who is sick. If you have symptoms of COVID-19, you should get tested and stay home and away from others.
- You still need to follow the guidance at your workplace.

Read more at [cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus).

Newton Public Schools Update

Full In-School Learning

We're emerging from the pandemic.

Starting on Monday, April 5, all elementary students who want to attend school in-person will be back in school five days a week with middle school students returning fulltime on April 28. High schoolers will be back four days a week for full day in-person classes starting on April 26.

All students who prefer to go back to school in person can do so. Likewise, any student who prefers to be in the distant learning program can.

All students will be in-person in September.

It's been a long year. All students were learning remotely last spring when COVID-19 erupted. Elementary and middle school students have had in-person learning a few days a week since September and November respectively while high school students have had some in person classes since late January/early February.

COVID-19 Testing for NPS Students and Staff

Newton Public Schools began offering PCR testing to adults working in person in December. From mid-December 2020 to the first week of March 2021, Newton Public Schools conducted 4,921 individual PCR tests as part of its Faculty Asymptomatic Testing Program and had 5 positive results.

In March, NPS switched over to a different type of testing known as "pool testing" and have been rolling it out to staff and students. As of last Friday, a cumulative total of 1,647 staff members took a pool test with one positive result, and 1,519 students tested with no positive results. More info is available on this NPS testing [dashboard](#).

Newton Public School COVID-19 Data

The State and the City has also been keeping track of positive cases since the school year began among our school community, including faculty, staff and students. These numbers include all tests performed, those done through outside testing sites and those performed through the school testing program.

As of March 17, 308 people in the NPS community had tested positive since September 14.

The dashboard with week by week school data will be available [here](#) tomorrow. We are shifting to weekly updates on Fridays (rather than daily) on our Newton COVID-19 [data page](#). (If we experience another surge, we will revert to daily updates.)

Nine House Breaks

Burglars broke into homes in the Waban/Newton Highlands neighborhood and a few in the Oak Hill areas of Newton between Friday, March 12 and Sunday, March 21. People were home during four of these break-ins, and thankfully no one was hurt. But, a lot of us are nervous.

In addition, several cars were also broken into during this period. While we continue to investigate, Newton Police made an arrest on Monday in connection with the car break-ins.

Police advise all of us to lock all windows and doors and to make sure there are no free-standing ladders outside that could be used to access second floors.

If you have any information regarding the recent house and/or motor vehicle breaks, please contact the Newton Police at 617-796-2100. Translators are always available. You may also call our Tips Line at 617-796-2121.

Chinese - 如有任何有关最近房屋和/或机动车辆破坏的信息，请联系牛顿警察 617-796-2100 或拨打我们的提示热线 617-796-2121

Japanese - 最近の住宅および自動車破壊に関する情報を提供した場合、ニュートン警察に 617-796-2100 までご連絡ください。また、私たちのヒントライン 617-796-2121 までご連絡ください。

Spanish - Si tiene alguna información relativa a los recientes robos, póngase en contacto con la Policía de Newton al 617-796-2100 o utilice nuestra línea de consejos al 617 796-2121.

Portuguese - Se você tiver qualquer informação sobre as recentes invasões ou roubos, entre em contato com a Polícia de Newton pelo telefone 617-796-2100 ou use nossa Linha de Dicas pelo telefone 617 796-2121.

Russian - Если у вас есть какая-либо информация о недавних взломах или краж, пожалуйста, свяжитесь с полицией Ньютона на 617-796-2100 или использовать наши советы линии на 617 796-2121.

Arabic - إذا كان لديك أي معلومات بخصوص عمليات السطو أو السطو الأخيرة ، يرجى الاتصال بشرطة نيوتن على 617-796-2100 أو استخدام خط النصائح الخاص بنا على 617-796-2121

Gath Pool's Path Forward

Newton's Gath Pool has provided a wonderful summer respite for nearly 60 years.

Sited at the Halloran Sports and Recreation Complex (affectionally known as Albemarle Park), the Gath Pool is our sole public outdoor swimming pool for

Newton's 88,000+ residents.

The pool is used daily in the summer, hosting swim lessons, summer camps, recreational and lap swimming, Special Athletes programs, programs for older residents and the City's coed Bluefish Swim Team made up of 200 members ages 5-18. At least 30,000 people use the pool each summer. Gath Pool also hosts the annual Summer Suburban Swim League regional championships with teams from 12 nearby communities and over 5,000 visitors. It is truly a critical City-wide recreational resource.



Gath Pool needs significant improvements. Our Parks, Recreation & Culture Department and Public Buildings Department are in the process of submitting a full proposal to the Community Preservation Committee at their April 13 meeting for an in-depth facilities study for Gath Pool. This facilities study, which will be bid out, will provide valuable information on options for renovating the main and kiddie pools, mechanical pump and filtration systems, and pool decks.

Once we receive the findings and recommendations, we will solicit input from across the City through a series of public meetings to discuss the options and determine the best path forward for Gath Pool's next 60 years.

For close to five years, the four clocks on the four sides of the City Hall cupola only twice a day were accurate. Thanks to Art Cabral from Newton's Public Buildings Department and repairs by D'Avanza Clock, the 15-foot long metal arms that connect the outside clock hands to the inside mechanisms are fixed, and three of the four clocks are now accurate. The fourth clock facing Commonwealth Avenue should be back "on time" next month. Its hands had to be removed to be repaired as the connection with the metal arms had worn out and the arm was bent.



Webster Woods

In December 2019, the City of Newton paid \$15.2 million to Boston College for a portion of forest at Webster Woods (off of Hammond Pond Parkway) to preserve in perpetuity the largest contiguous parcel of open space in Newton.

The acquisition of the BC land ensures the permanent preservation and continued access for Newton residents to the woods, rocky ledges and the vernal pool on the land, and preserves access to the 88+ acres of forest to either side cared for by the City of Newton and the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation.

As expected, the Trustees of Boston College served upon the City of Newton a civil lawsuit on March 9, 2021 in Superior Court challenging the amount of money it received from the City as compensation for the eminent domain taking of the Webster Woods property.

Please know that not only were we expecting this complaint from BC, but also it is within their rights to make this claim and is not unusual in matters involving eminent domain takings.

The complaint does not challenge the actual taking itself. Rather, BC argues that the

taking diminished the value of the remaining portion of the property and that the \$15.2 million dollars it received was not a fair or adequate amount. BC requests that a jury decide whether they are entitled to additional compensation plus interest.

Newton's Law Department continues to work with outside counsel and filed a response to this complaint earlier today asserting the City's position that the amount BC received for the land is fair and appropriate.

On Sunday, hundreds gathered in front of City Hall to support our Asian and Pacific Islander friends, neighbors and colleagues in Newton who are reeling from shunning, verbal harassment and racial slurs, physical assaults and murder. We stood together to stop Asian hate and to make sure everyone in Newton is seen and heard, respected and valued, and feels safe and welcomed.



Spring. More daylight. Daffodils. Warmer weather. Passover. The Hindu spring festival of color, Holi. Holy Week and Easter. Vaccinations. Full time in-person learning. Hope is in the air and a spring is in our steps.

Warmly,

Ruthanne



Janhavi Wadhwani, and Menka Sharma at the Holi celebration in 2019.)

P.S. Everyone of all ages and backgrounds is welcome to join Newton's Indian community to celebrate the **spring festival of color, Holi, this weekend. Create your own Chalk Art** on Saturday, March 27 between 10:00 a.m. and noon in front of City Hall (1,000 Commonwealth Avenue). Chalk will be provided or bring your own. (We'll be practicing physical distancing and wearing masks.)

(Photo: from left, Sharad Chand, Reeya and Ajay Wadhwani, with their mother,

P.P.S. Watch, listen and learn as our community members share the **hardships and joys of Asian American girls and women** navigating their identity and breaking through stereotypes. Directed by Edie Pike and Valerie Goldstein and hosted by the **Newton Theatre Company**, you can reserve your "seat" for the virtual production on Saturday, April 10 at 8:00 p.m. and "pay what you can" by clicking [here](#).

P.P.P.S. Are you starting a project that involves digging in your yard – maybe planting a tree or installing a fence? Whether you're using heavy equipment or just a shovel, know what's below before you dig. Striking a single underground utility line can cause injuries, fines, repair costs, and inconvenient outages. Stay safe and call the national “**call before you dig**” phone number at **8-1-1** at least two days before starting your project to make sure you know where the utility lines are located. Find more information [here](#).

P.P.P.P.S. Join me online next Tuesday, March 30, from 7:00 to 8:00 p.m. to learn from Newton's new **Energy Coach, Liora Silkes**. She can help us “uncomplicate the complicated” as we each try to do less and green the rest. Sign up for the event at bit.ly/meet-energy-coach.



Mayor Fuller invites you to
Spring for the Climate:
Meet Newton's Energy Coach

Tuesday, March 30, 2021 7-8PM

Newton has set a goal to reduce its carbon emissions and residents have a big role to play. Come learn about the 'tools' that can help un-complicate the complicated so you can make the best decisions on taking climate action.

- Meet Liora Silkes, Newton's Energy Coach
- Learn how the new Energy Coach website can help you
- Find out more about Newton's Climate Action Plan (CAP)
- Learn more about the 4 Top Climate Actions

Sign up for this online event at
<http://bit.ly/meet-energy-coach>

OR
Use your smartphone's camera to scan the QR code.

