

Thursday, Nov. 4, 2021

Mayor's Update

Children 5 to 11 years old are now eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine and the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) is recommending the pediatric Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine. Gov. Charlie Baker said this morning that children's dose vaccine has started shipping to Massachusetts and that he doesn't anticipate any supply issues.



Children's vaccines will be available in 500 locations across the Commonwealth, including at pediatricians' offices, pharmacies, hospitals and community health centers.

We are also offering the pediatric COVID-19 vaccine in Newton at clinics organized by our Health and Human Services Department in partnership with the Newton Public Schools next weekend. Huge thanks go once again to the Holtzman Medical Group for running the clinics.

FIRST DOSE VACCINE CLINICS FOR 5 TO 11 YEAR OLDS

Saturday, Nov. 13, 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
and
Sunday, Nov. 14, 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

At Newton North High School, 457 Walnut Street, Newton
and at
Oak Hill Middle School, 130 Wheeler Road, Newton

Clinics will be held at both locations on both days.

Second dose clinics in Newton will be held on Saturday, Dec. 4 and Sunday, Dec. 5 at the same locations.

After school pediatric vaccine clinics are in the planning stages.

Additional details, including how to register, will be posted soon on the Newton Health and Human Services [website](#). Also on our website is a list of pharmacies in the Newton area that are offering the pediatric vaccine.

The pediatric vaccine is a two-dose series given three weeks apart and at one-third the dose given to adults. The vaccine has proven to be safe and 91% effective in preventing COVID-19 in children, protecting them from catching the virus and from spreading it to others, especially those with compromised immune systems. The data shows the most common side effect is a sore arm.

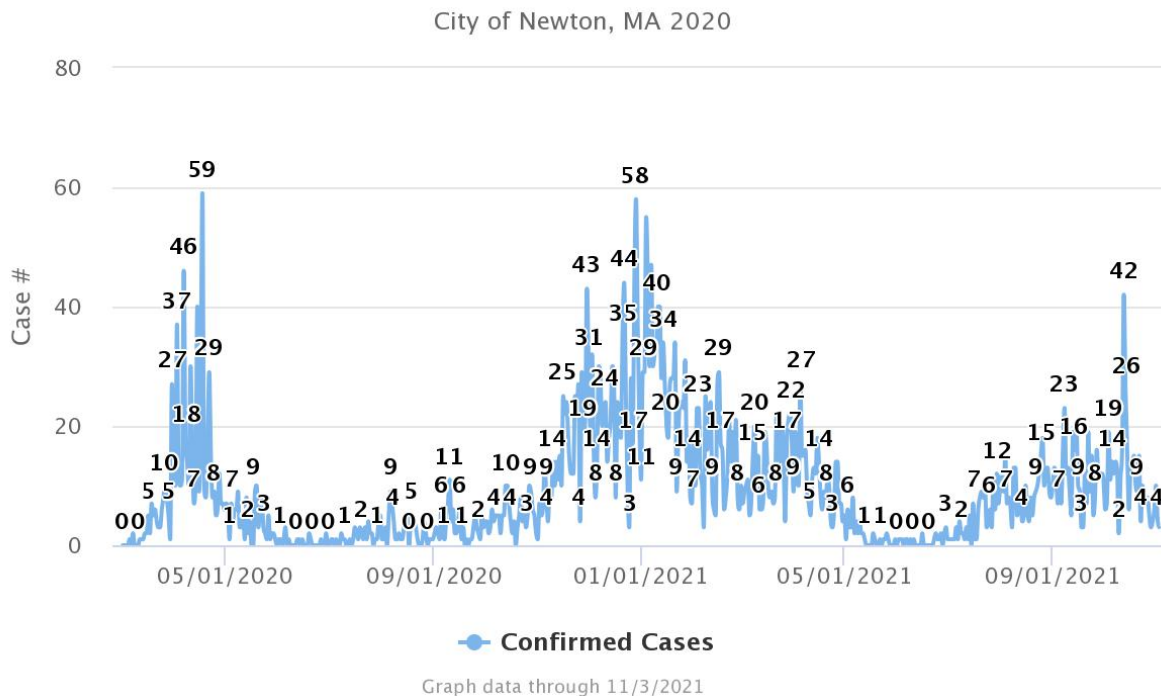
Questions? Find more information at the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](https://www.cdc.gov) or speak with your child's pediatrician or healthcare provider.

Find a vaccine appointment at vaxfinder.mass.gov.

Case Data

We had 42 new confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Newton over the past seven days from Oct. 28 to Nov. 3, which is 27 cases fewer than over the previous seven days.

Newton COVID-19 Cases



COVID-19 in Newton

Total Cases
5,517

Total Deaths
219

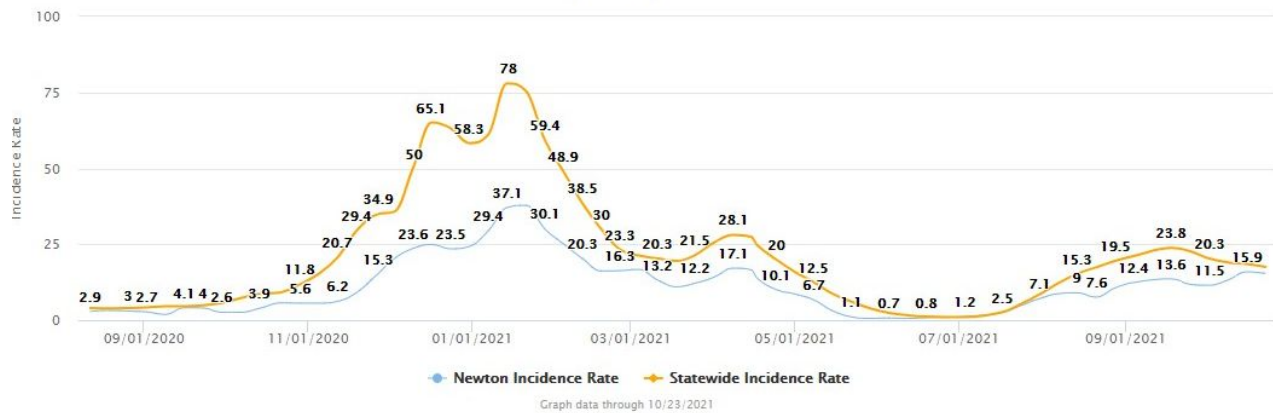
*As of 11/3/21

Newton's cumulative total of people who have had confirmed cases of COVID-19 since the pandemic began is now 5,517. Thankfully, no one in Newton died with COVID this week.

The average daily incidence rate in Newton over the State's two-week tracking period from Oct. 17 to Oct. 30 is 9.7 (per 100,000 population), a noticeable decrease from last week's 15.3, and the 15.9 prior to that. (The chart below will be updated with this additional information.)

Average Daily Incidence per 100,000 People

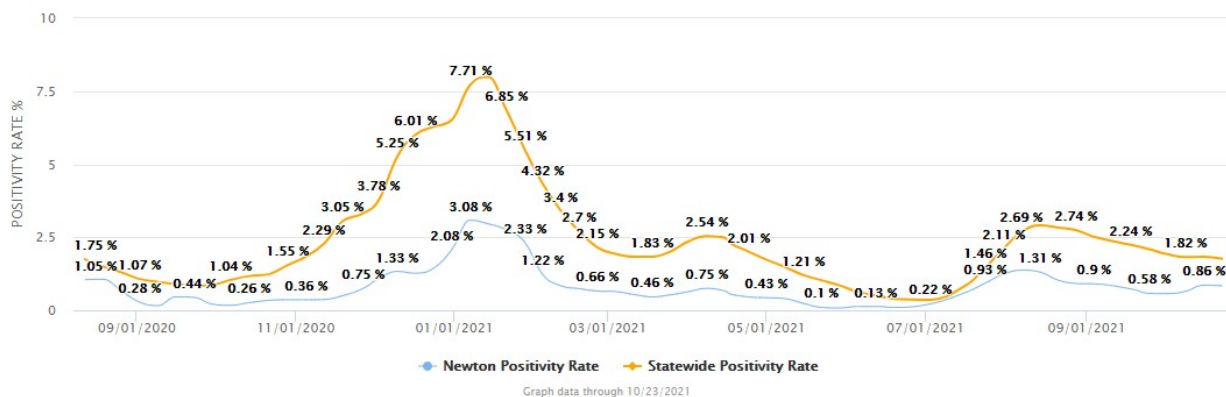
City of Newton, MA 2021



Our positivity rate is 0.6% of the 25,246 tests performed, which is also down from last week's 0.8% of the 27,225 tests performed. (The positivity rate is the percentage of all the coronavirus tests performed that are positive.)

Positivity Rate

City of Newton, MA 2021



The ages of the 124 people who tested positive in Newton during this State tracking period between Oct. 17 and 30 are:

- 27% were under 12 years old
- 10% were between 12 and 19 years old
- 21% were between 20 and 39 years old
- 23% were between 40 and 59 years old
- 12% were between 60 and 79 years old
- 6% were 80 years or older

Eight percent (8%) of these cases were students at one of Newton's institutes of higher education.

As of Tuesday, Nov. 3, Newton-Wellesley Hospital is caring for a total of 10 patients hospitalized with COVID-19, and three (3) of these patients are in the Intensive Care Unit. Over the week, the number of critically ill patients with COVID-19 ranged from zero (0) to three (3) patients.

Newton Public School COVID-19 Data

There has been a total of 131 cases of COVID-19 in the Newton Public Schools reported to the Health and Human Services Department since school began on Sept. 2. This includes two (2) students who tested positive between Oct. 28 and Nov. 3 and four (4) staff members. (As a reminder, when looking at NPS data, sometimes cases are added to previous weeks based on tests as they are reported/confirmed.)

Find more information on the Health and Human Services webpage [here](#), and at the NPS Testing Data Dashboard [here](#).

Thanking Deb Youngblood and Congratulating Linda Walsh

For nearly two years Commissioner of Health and Human Services Deborah Youngblood and Deputy Commissioner Linda Walsh guided us through an historic pandemic with professionalism, wisdom, grace and a focus on the health and safety of every one of us.

This has been a profoundly difficult period to be a public health leader. Everyone in Newton was touched by decisions that Commissioner Youngblood and Deputy Commissioner Walsh made: Could schools or businesses be open? When must we wear a mask? Should vaccines be mandated? In addition, our decisions had life and death implications and yet our information on COVID-19 was often incomplete in the early months and our understanding and the science kept getting updated.



(Photo: With Deborah Youngblood to my right and Linda Walsh to my left.)

These two people provided us with up-to-date information and constant guidance – for individuals, for businesses and for our community. They made the science understandable. They helped make contact tracing, testing and vaccines available. They supported so many of us with our understandable anxieties and with links to financial, housing, and food supports. During all of this,

they were calm, steady, intelligent and compassionate.

Today, after six exceptional years of service to the City of Newton, I announce that Commissioner Youngblood is leaving to become the Executive Director of Mothers Milk Bank Northeast which coincidentally is headquartered here in Newton.

I also announce the promotion of Linda Walsh as our next Commissioner of Health and Human Services, pending approval of the City Council.

I am grateful to and have deep respect for both women.

With more than 500 top health officials in America leaving their jobs over the course of the pandemic, I am also grateful to have Linda Walsh, an experienced partner in place, ready to carry on the good work, and to lead this critical department.

Linda is a Registered Nurse (RN) with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree from Boston College. She has deep experience in public health as she began working for the City of Newton in 1987. For literally decades, she has been our “go to” on so many issues, from public health, school health and school nursing, emergency health services, restaurant health and safety, employee wellness, human rights, and so much more.

COVID-19 required the creation of a whole new staffing, resource, and information infrastructure, one that had to be successful immediately, without the luxury of months of designing or testing. Every division in the HHS Department required rethinking and reorganizing. Public Health and Environmental Health, the two divisions Linda heads up, reinvented itself over and over again.

Linda’s team also helped all the other City Departments reimagine themselves and Linda was the lead person for much of this work. So, too, when employees wanted to understand the impact of the virus on their particular and unique situations, Linda was there to help.

We know that Linda is incredibly smart. She understands the science of public health and easily translates those concepts into successful practices and protocols that meet the needs of the people on the ground in our schools and workplaces. Just as important, she is a caring person, positive, empathetic and compassionate.

I have complete confidence in Linda and look forward to her leadership at the helm of HHS.

While I know Linda is the right person to carry this department forward, I say goodbye to Deb Youngblood with deep gratitude.

Deb is a person of integrity and compassion who cares deeply about the people who live and work in Newton. Over her tenure leading this department at the intersection of public health and social services, she expanded the number of social workers from one full-time position to three and a half, allowing us to connect more people in need with services, offer more programs, and create more awareness and education.

As a founder of the multi-faceted Newton PATH, she helped address the opioid epidemic in our community, creating a strong partnership with Newton-Wellesley Hospital which now has a substance use disorder clinic.

Under her leadership, HHS expanded the Youth Services Division and Summer Internship Program which allows Newton high school students to have more of a

voice and an opportunity to spend a summer working at a variety of businesses and non-profits.

During the course of this pandemic, Deb was my trusted partner, always by my side answering questions and calls 24 hours a day, seven days a week. So many of us looked to Deb for answers to questions that had never before been asked. Through it all, despite enormous stress, her unflinching reliance on science and an inspiring commitment to her department and to this City were invaluable to me and to Newton.

I thank her for her extraordinary service to our City. I am excited for her and her new opportunity.



ARPA: Helping the Arts

Earlier this fall, I announced the creation of a new grant program, *Revitalize Creative Newton*.

The \$75,000 in grants will support Newton's non-profit arts community by helping cover

expenses related to reopening and resuming of cultural programming and services in the wake of the pandemic.

We are using American Rescue Plan Act (a.k.a, ARPA) funds to support these organizations who were so hard hit during the pandemic.

Newton non-profit arts and cultural organizations of any budget size that demonstrate they have been negatively economically impacted by COVID-19 are eligible to apply. We will take into consideration when awarding the grants the potential to have an immediate impact on the arts workforce and to reach individuals whose opportunities to experience the arts are limited by race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, socioeconomic status, disability, other protected and important classes of people, and geography.

Applications will be accepted through the end of November.

Want to learn more about *Revitalize Creative Newton* and the application process? Two zoom information sessions are available on Tuesday, Nov. 9 from 9:00 to 10:30 a.m. and on Thursday, Nov. 18 from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. Register [here](#) and find more information about *Revitalize Creative Newton* [here](#).

Veteran's Day

We will pause on the 11th hour of the 11th month— Veterans Day (Thursday, Nov. 11) —to honor our military veterans who have served our country at home and around the world.

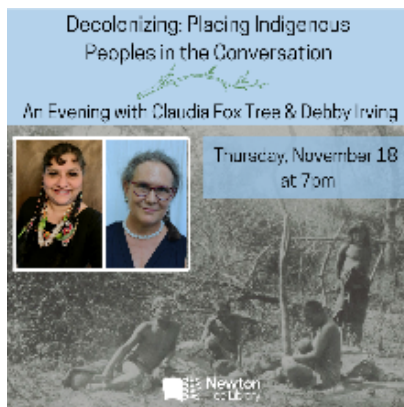
We will hear from keynote speaker Dr. Beth Fitzmaurice, who served as a Captain in the Army and as an instructor at West Point, and is currently Newton's Assistant School Superintendent for Student Services.

We will gather (in person this year) at the American Legion Nonantum Post 440, 295 California St., at 11:00 a.m. Consider coming early at 10:00 a.m. to help make care packages and to donate a used cell phone, non-perishable food, healthy snacks, drink mixes or coffee for our troops.

Warmly,

Ruthanne

P.S. Don't throw your pumpkin in with your yard waste. Instead, have fun smashing it for compost. Stop by the rear of City Hall (1000 Commonwealth Avenue) this Saturday, Nov. 6 at the **Great Pumpkin Smash** from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. All the demolished pumpkins will be composted by Black Earth Compost.



P.P.S. Join Claudia Fox Tree and Debby Irving for an online discussion on **Decolonizing: Placing Indigenous Peoples in the Conversation** on Thursday, Nov. 18 at 7:00 p.m. The speakers will explore how U.S. narratives shaped their understanding of themselves, one another and the complex world we live in. This program is part of the ongoing [Overdue: Confronting Race and Racism in Newton](#) series. Register [here](#).

P.P.P.S. Newton Neighbors is sponsoring a **Thanksgiving Gift Card Drive** from Nov. 1 – 22. Your purchase and donation of a \$50 gift card to a local supermarket will help put food on a neighbor's table. Drop-off cards at these locations: 137 Annawan Road in Waban, 51 Hyde Street in Newton Centre, 40 Sewall Street in West Newton, 22 Florence Court in Newtonville, OddFellows Ice Cream Company at the Street in Chestnut Hill, and Clark's Cakes and Cookies in the Project Pop Up location at 141 Needham Street. Alternatively, you can visit [here](#) and Newton Neighbors will use your donation to purchase gift cards to distribute to families experiencing food insecurity.

P.P.P.P.S. You might notice the purple lights dotting the trees outside of City Hall. Purple is the color of epilepsy awareness, a disease which affects 65 million people around the world. November is **Epilepsy Awareness Month** in Newton. Learn more [here](#).

P.P.P.P.S. Join the **Burr Elementary School** PTO and Burr FORJ on Sunday, Nov. 7 from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. at 171 Pine Street in Auburndale for a free, family friendly **outdoor celebration** honoring two unique holidays: **Diwali**, the Festival of Lights and **Dia de los Muertos**, the Day of the Dead. Enjoy dancing, music, arts & crafts, concessions and much more.



P.P.P.P.P.S. Daylight Savings Time comes to an end this Sunday, Nov. 7. As we “Fall back” an hour, take a moment to **check the batteries in your smoke detectors and carbon monoxide** detectors to ensure they are in working order. Enjoy that extra hour of sleep!



Mayor Ruthanne Fuller | 1000 Commonwealth Avenue, Newton, MA 02459

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