

Thursday, April 28, 2022

Mayor's Update



We had 253 confirmed new cases of COVID-19 in Newton over the past week from April 21 to 27, a jump from last week's 177 cases and the 203 we saw during the week prior.

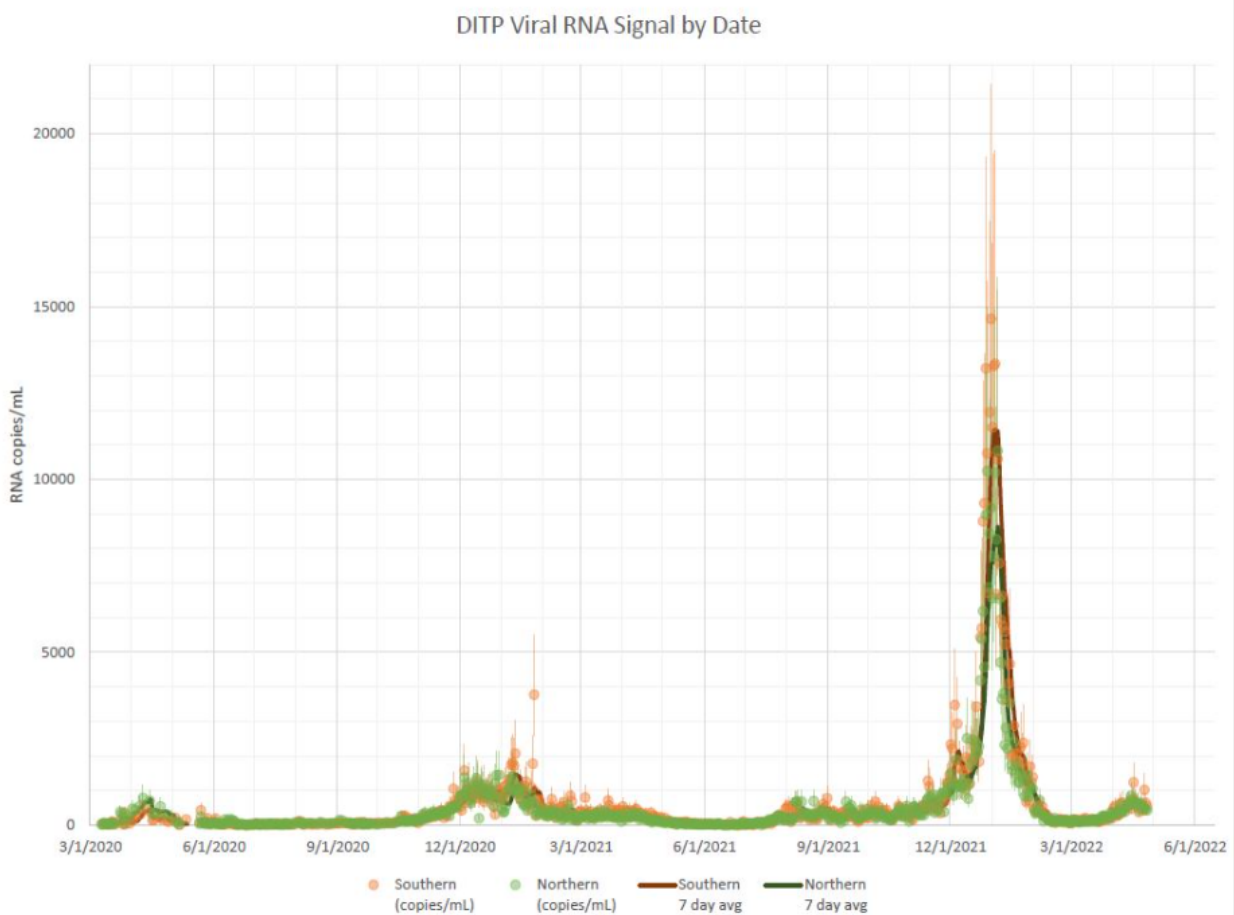
As of Tuesday, April 28, Newton-Wellesley Hospital is caring for a total of six (6) patients with COVID-19, none of whom are in the Intensive Care Unit. NWH reports an uptick in cases over the past few weeks with a high of 12 patients hospitalized over the past week. This number, however, still remains much lower than what was seen at the peak of the last surge in January when 58 patients were hospitalized.

Over the two-week State tracking period from April 10 to 23, the incidence rate and the positivity rate also crept up. The positivity rate in Newton is now 4.7% positive of the 9,888 tests performed on Newton residents (compared to 4.0% of 10,815 last week), and the incidence rate is now 33.7 per 100,000 population (compared to 31.9 last week).

While the various case data shows numbers are going up, and the official numbers do not include people testing at home whose cases are not reported, there is some good news. The latest MWRA wastewater COVID tracking data as of Tuesday, April 26, shows levels across the system dropping. This data has been a reliable predictor of virus levels throughout the pandemic. The chart below shows systemwide levels. Click here to see more wastewater [data](#).

Wastewater COVID-19 Tracking

Biobot Data - samples submitted through 04/26/2022



The best news is that this week we had no one in Newton die with COVID-19.

So where are we in the pandemic? At his first press conference on Tuesday as White House COVID-19 Response Coordinator, Newton resident Dr. Ashish Jha said he believes we are at an inflection point. Cases are rising across the country while hospitalizations remain low. But, this is a tricky virus, he said, and the risk of potential surges, even of a potential new variant, remains.

“The good news is we are at a point where we have a lot more capabilities, a lot more tools to protect the American people: testing, vaccines, therapeutics. These are the sort of the pillars of how we manage the rest of this pandemic.” Read the full transcript of what Dr. Jha said [here](#).

Newton Public Schools Case Data

The Newton Public Schools had 179 cases among students and 52 among staff during the two week period from April 14 to 27 including school vacation week. This is an increase. During the week previous to this from April 7 to 13, NPS had 93 cases among students and 17 among staff. Find more information on Newton’s Health and Human Services Data page [here](#).

Congratulations to Phil Herr. He received the 2022 Sheila Mondshein Fair Housing Award which honors a person each year who has shown outstanding leadership and accomplishment in promoting fair housing in the City of Newton. Phil is a true leader, who worked for decades with respect, intelligence and a measured style to promote greater access to housing.

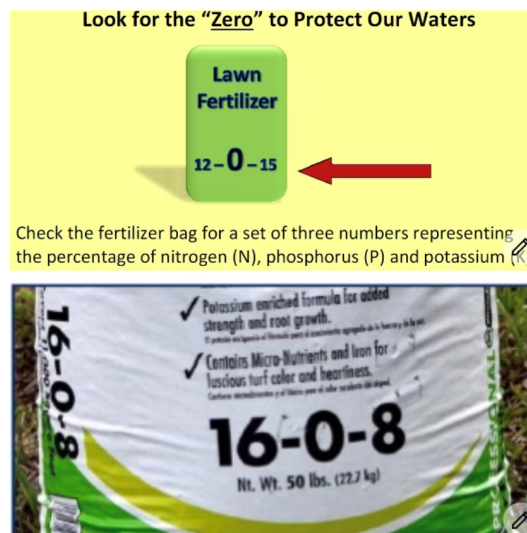


(Photo: With me, seated from left, Chair of the Newton Fair Housing Committee Esther Schlorholtz and Phil Herr. Standing is the immediate past Chair of the Fair Housing Committee Ted Hess-Mahan, who I want to thank for his dedicated service leading this committee.)

Green Lawn and Green Planet

It's possible to keep our lawns green while also helping to keep our planet green.

As we get our lawns in shape this spring, be mindful when applying fertilizer, herbicides and pesticides. Read labels carefully, apply correctly, and less is often more when it comes to fertilizer.



Excess fertilizer doesn't make your lawn healthier or greener. Rather, it washes off into storm drains and then into waterways including the Charles River and Crystal Lake. This causes the growth of a host of bacteria and algae "blooms" that feed off the fertilizer's nutrients. Some of these blooms, such as cyanobacteria (blue-green algae), are unhealthy for people, pets, and wildlife.

Per [state law](#), phosphorus-containing fertilizers may only be applied when a soil test indicates that it is needed or for a newly established lawn. Phosphorus is naturally occurring in our soils and often unnecessary to add to a lawn. Look for fertilizer labels with 0 for the middle number (i.e., zero phosphorus).

Soil testing can be really helpful to find out just how much fertilizer, lime and other products a lawn may need to stay healthy. Find more information about soil nutrients and testing at mass.gov/soil.

Keeping Crystal Lake Healthy.

High levels of nutrients in Crystal Lake have created a cycle of algal blooms in past summers. To combat this, the City of Newton is starting the second phase of a successful treatment plan to break the cycle and improve water quality in Crystal Lake. We are treating nutrients in the sediments sitting in the deepest portion of the lake.

(Photo: Clear water at Crystal Lake on May 13, 2020, one week after treatment.)

As we did two years ago, this May our contractors will be dispersing a water treatment solution in the deepest areas of the pond. The water may appear cloudy for a few days but, rest assured, it's still perfectly safe for humans and animals. The first treatment was done two years ago, and last year, even with all the rain we had, we avoided having a major bloom.



The solution itself consists of an aluminum-based compound often used in municipal drinking water treatment. This is a common treatment process that is safe for aquatic life. Our contractors will disperse the solution in a targeted area of the lake from a motorized boat. While the water may initially appear cloudy, the water will clear up and the solution will dissipate within a day or two of application. Our contractors will be monitoring the lake – before, during and after the treatment for lake water chemistry.

The treatment is scheduled for Tuesday, May 3, (with May 4 and 5 as back up dates since work can't be done in heavy rain or windy conditions).

Have some questions? Click [here](#) for answers to frequently asked questions.

Improving Albemarle Park and Gath Pool

We're moving forward with plans to improve playing and recreation options at Albemarle Park (our highest use sports facility) and to replace and expand the Gath Pool.

Join us to hear more and help us refine the plans. After months of work that included analyzing data from a community survey, the Parks, Recreation & Culture (PRC) staff is ready to present multiple design options for Albemarle Park. The options include new ball fields (baseball and softball) and a multi-purpose playing field for soccer, football, lacrosse, and more. The plans also include walking trails, improved and modern lighting, accessibility improvements, pickleball courts, more trees, and a new swimming pool and splash pad. As we work on Albemarle Park improvements, we are also looking into stormwater management opportunities.

(Click on the photo below to see a PowerPoint about some preliminary options.)

WHAT WE HEARD

- Focus on placement of multipurpose rectangular fields, with one dedicated as synthetic turf
- Retain the open feel of the area south of the pool (Keep Roche as is)
- South of Gath Pool, show improvements to backstops, accessible dug out and overall refreshing of the ball diamonds; retain 2 mature oak trees
- Include approximate backstops, netting, etc. for ball diamonds and LAX
- Review Avery Woods deed in case some work is required on parcel
- Consider replacing tennis courts with Pickleball courts
- Ensure football can fit within dedicated multipurpose fields
- Turf field should accommodate multi-purpose sports
- Retain the existing Middle School track and multiuse field south of Gath without pedestrian pass throughs
- Irrigation wells on site will be used



The Albemarle Park options will be presented at a community meeting on Tuesday, May 3 from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. and the Gath Pool design will be presented immediately afterward at 7:30 to 9:00 p.m. Click [here](#) to register for the virtual meeting where both topics will be discussed.

Mayor's Community Breakfast

We'll come together in person for our annual community breakfast to break bread and renew our commitment to this good City.

Join us for the 48th Annual Theodore D. Mann Newton Mayor's Community Breakfast on Wednesday, May 25, at the Mount Ida Campus - UMass Amherst. We'll gather at 7:30 a.m. outside, under a tent, in the Shaw Hall Courtyard.



In conjunction with the Harmony Foundation, the Newton Interfaith Clergy Association, the Rotary Club of Newton, and the Newton Public Schools, I invite residents, community groups, business people and clergy of all faiths to join us.

We look forward to “Spring Forward – With Hope” after another challenging year to celebrate and strengthen our community ties, neighbor to neighbor.

Tickets are available at bit.ly/newtonbreakfast (\$35 per person).

We also invite voluntary contributions at the Community Breakfast to benefit programs helping with food insecurity in Newton, [The Newton Food Pantry](#), [Centre Street Food Pantry](#), [The Arabic Baptist Food Pantry](#), or [The Newton Community Freedge](#).

Warmly,

Ruthanne



P.S. **Family Fun Fest** returns on Saturday and Sunday, May 14 and 15, at City Hall. Enjoy live music, a public art exhibition, vendors, the Tanglewood Marionettes production of *The Dragon King* ([tickets on sale now!](#)), and a full carnival complete with kiddie rides and food trucks. Find details at Newton’s [Cultural Development webpage](#). Special thanks to our event sponsors, Mass Cultural Council and Bubble - children’s dentistry and orthodontics in Newton Centre.

P.P.S. Join players from the New England Patriots to support the **Carroll Center for the Blind at the 10th Annual 5K & Walk for Independence** on Saturday, May 14, 8:00 a.m. to noon, on the Mt. Ida Campus of UMass Amherst (100 Carlson Ave.). The family friendly event includes food, music, accessible games, a bouncy house, and much more. Both sighted and visually impaired individuals will have opportunities to participate. Find more information at Carroll.org/Walk or email development@carroll.org.



P.P.P.S. Celebrate the **Gilded Age in Newton** to benefit **Historic Newton** on Sunday, May 15 from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Enjoy hearty hors d’oeuvres and wine while strolling the garden and terraces of a beautifully preserved 1908 Newton home whose construction was commissioned and carefully overseen by F.E. Stanley (of Stanley Steamer automobile fame). For more information, call 617-641-9142 ext 11 or click [here](#).

P.P.P.P.S. Diapers are expensive and having to buy them can be a financial struggle. Help Newton Neighbors **provide diapers** to local families in need by donating diapers between Saturday, April 30 through Friday, May 13 in size newborn to size 6.(Find drop off

locations [here](#)). Diapers will be distributed on Saturday, May 14 from FamilyACCESS, 492 Waltham St., West Newton, and at the American Legion Nonantum Post 440, 295 California St.


Newton Neighbors Diaper (NB-Size 6) Distribution Day
 PICK UP FREE DIAPERS FOR YOUR FAMILY ON MAY 14TH BETWEEN 7:30 AM - 12:30 PM AT ONE OF THESE LOCATIONS:
 AMERICAN LEGION NONANTUM POST 440 (295 CALIFORNIA ST, NONANTUM)
 FAMILYACCESS OF NEWTON (492 WALTHAM ST, WEST NEWTON)

牛頓鄰居協會分發紙尿褲 (尺寸: NB-6 新生儿 六号)
 欢迎在五月十四日, 7:30AM-12:30PM 在以下的地址为您的孩子领取免费纸尿裤:
 AMERICAN LEGION NONANTUM POST 440 (295 CALIFORNIA ST, NONANTUM)
 FAMILYACCESS OF NEWTON (492 WALTHAM ST, WEST NEWTON)

Dia de Distribuição de Fraldas dos Vizinhos de Newton
 PEGUE FRaldas GRATUITAS PARA SUA FAMILIA NO DIA 14 DE MAIO ENTRE 7:30AM E 12:30PM NUMA DESTAS LOCALIZAÇÕES:
 AMERICAN LEGION NONANTUM POST 440 (295 CALIFORNIA ST, NONANTUM)
 FAMILYACCESS OF NEWTON (492 WALTHAM ST, WEST NEWTON)

Ньютон устраивает бесплатную раздачу детских подгузников (дайперс). Размеры: NB-6.
 ПРИХОДИТЕ С 7.30 УТРА ДО 12.30 ПО СЛЕДУЮЩИМ АДРЕСАМ:
 AMERICAN LEGION NONANTUM POST 440 (295 CALIFORNIA ST, NONANTUM)
 FAMILYACCESS OF NEWTON (492 WALTHAM ST, WEST NEWTON)

VECINOS DE NEWTON: Día de Distribución de Pañales Gratis
 SE PUEDE RECOGER PAÑALES GRATIS PARA TU FAMILIA EL DÍA DEL SÁBADO 14 DE MAYO, ENTRE 7:30AM Y 12:30PM A UNO DE LOS SITIOS SIGUIENTES:
 AMERICAN LEGION NONANTUM POST 440 (295 CALLE CALIFORNIA, BARRIO NONANTUM)
 FAMILYACCESS DE NEWTON (492 CALLE WALTHAM, BARRIO WEST NEWTON)

 <https://www.newtonneighbors.org/>
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/newtonneighborshelping>
<https://www.instagram.com/welcomeinnewton/>
newtonneighborshelping@gmail.com



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

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