

Wellbeing in Time of COVID with Dr. Laurie Santos: Live on New Bedford Guide on Dec. 3

COVID-19 has changed how we live but it doesn't have to affect our happiness. Take that from Dr. Laurie Santos, New Bedford High School graduate (Class of '93) and Professor of Psychology and Head of Silliman College at Yale University.

Even before COVID-19, many people were not living their happiest life. Perhaps they were not taking care of themselves physically. Or they got caught up in comparing themselves to other people. Or they ran on a hedonic treadmill that would never satisfy them.

Throw in a pandemic and things only get more complicated. Socially distanced, we work from home when we can and we wear masks in public. It's the socially responsible thing to do, but that does not mean it's always easy. At times, this "new normal" can make us feel helpless and even lonely.

Thankfully, Dr. Santos created Yale's most popular course, Psychology and the Good Life, to teach her students how psychology-based principles can guide them to choices that will help them live happier and more fulfilling lives. Even in a pandemic! A version of the course was made available free to the public on Coursera and made headlines worldwide. She now shares life tips on her popular podcast, The Happiness Lab, which has over 20 million downloads.

In these times of COVID-19, it is more important than ever that we focus on our well-being. That means staying socially connected and being grateful for the things we have. We are fortunate to have Dr. Santos join the New Bedford Guide, The

New Bedford Wellness Initiative, The COVID-19 Action Coalition, and other community groups on Facebook Live on Thursday, December 3 from 6:30 to 8:00pm. In her talk, she'll discuss 10 ways to find happiness and support our well-being in these trying times. This will be followed by an open Q&A session. Join us and build on your happiness today.

FREE SPEAKER EVENT!

**WELLBEING IN THE
TIME OF COVID-19
WITH DR. LAURIE
SANTOS**

THURS. DEC. 3 | 6:30-8:00PM

**LIVE ON FACEBOOK
@ NEW BEDFORD GUIDE**



Dr. Laurie Santos is an expert on human cognition and the cognitive biases that impede better choices. As Professor of Psychology and Head of Silliman College at Yale University, she developed a course, Psychology and the Good Life, that has been featured in numerous news outlets including the New York Times, NBC Nightly News, The Today Show, GQ Magazine, Slate and O! Magazine. A winner of numerous awards both for her science and teaching, she was recently voted as one of Popular Science Magazine's "Brilliant 10" young minds, and was named in Time Magazine as a "Leading Campus Celebrity."

Poll: More than a third in Massachusetts unlikely to get COVID-19 vaccine

Michael P. Norton

State House News Service

More than a third of Massachusetts adults would be unlikely to get the vaccine for COVID-19, according to new poll results, with adults who feel that way citing a lack of trust in the approval process and concerns about side effects.

The Western New England University Polling Institute surveyed 415 adults and also found that 90 percent said they support their city or town requiring people to wear masks in public places, 64 percent said they are very or somewhat worried about contracting COVID-19, and 66 percent said they know someone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19, with 29 percent saying they know someone who has died from COVID-19.

“Despite the suffering and deprivation that people may have encountered either firsthand or through the experiences of others during the pandemic, a sizable percentage of the public right now is not convinced about the value of getting a vaccine,” said institute director Tim Vercellotti. “Of course, these numbers may fluctuate as the public receives more information and as distribution of vaccines gets underway.”

The poll, which found nearly 60 percent of adults said they were likely to get the vaccine, was conducted by phone over a one-month period ending Nov. 24. It has a margin of error of plus or minus five percentage points. Analysts believe a limited quantity of vaccine could be released this month, pending government approval, and public officials are deliberating over who will be the first to get vaccinated, with health care workers and older Americans with underlying

health conditions among the groups likely to get access first. Officials say COVID-19 is the cause of deaths so far this year of more than 10,000 residents of Massachusetts.

Fairhaven Firefighters to conduct free COVID testing

FAIRHAVEN ALERT: Fairhaven Firefighters will be conducting FREE COVID testing on November 28th, for Fairhaven Residents.

The testing will be done at the Fairhaven Recreation Center (227 Huttleston Ave) from 9am to 12pm. No appointment is needed. Visit Fairhaven-ma.gov for more information.

Acushnet Fire Chief Kevin Gallagher statement about positive COVID test results after town testing

A message from Chief Kevin Gallagher:

“We just completed a six-hour Covid testing clinic which, for the first time, utilized rapid tests. A total of 530 Acushnet residents participated. A total of 15 new cases in Acushnet were identified.

“Those who tested positive received a call from me informing them of their results. That was tough to do. Almost all were caught by surprise. All mentioned that they will now do the right thing and quarantine.

“Texts went out to all those that tested negative. If by chance the text failed to connect please know that if we didn’t connect you tested negative. We apologize for the few hours it took to send the initial round of texts. We serviced a large number of people with a core group of extraordinary staff.

“Tomorrow, I will be thankful for my health, that of my family and friends as well as the 515 Acushnet residents who tested negative for Covid today.

“And I will say a prayer for the 15 residents who didn’t”. - Kevin.

Six New Bedford bars fined for violating COVID-19 orders to protect residents

The New Bedford Health Department has issued fines to six New Bedford businesses for failure to comply with the City’s COVID-19 regulations and protections for residents.

Whiskey Lounge at 1669 Acushnet Avenue, and Sebastian’s at 110 County Street, were each fined \$300 for failure to comply with mask-wearing regulations.

Legends at 78 Covell Street was fined twice, \$300 and \$600, for violations on two consecutive days, for failure to comply

with mask-wearing regulations and social distancing.

New Bedford Bar & Grill at 116 County Street, and The Bar at 266 Dartmouth Street were each fined \$600 for violations of the social distancing and mask-wearing regulations.

Freddie's Café at 175 Sawyer Street was fined \$600 for failure to comply with mask-wearing regulations and for permitting dancing at its establishment, which is not permitted under COVID-19 safety regulations.

Violation orders were issued November 20 after inspections by the New Bedford Health Department. Businesses and employees are reminded to comply with mask-wearing to keep themselves and others safe.

Earlier this year, Mayor Jon Mitchell and the Board of Health announced emergency orders to keep employees safe at their place of work, and to outline reporting requirements of COVID-19 in the workplace. The orders include strong measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in workplaces

Businesses will be subject to fines for failure to comply with the City's orders, including failure to protect employees and failure to notify the Health Department of an outbreaks. The orders can be found on New Bedford's COVID-19 webpage: <https://www.newbedford-ma.gov/health-department/coronavirus/>.

Massachusetts records 50,000 COVID-19 in 25 days

Chris Lisinski
State House News Service

In a sign of the power of the second COVID-19 surge that has been underway, Massachusetts jumped from 150,000 cumulative cases to 200,000 in just 25 days. Getting from 100,000 to 150,000, by comparison, took from June 1 until Oct. 28, a stretch of 149 days. More than 5,700 additional COVID-19 cases were confirmed over the weekend and the state hit another harrowing milestone Sunday by surpassing 200,000 confirmed infections since the start of the pandemic.

While new cases are being detected and counted in daily totals similar to those last seen in the spring, far more tests are being conducted this fall and the positive test rate is significantly lower than during the initial peak.

The 5,712 new cases reported across Saturday and Sunday came alongside reporting of 219,519 new tests, and the seven-day average positive test rate dropped from 3.5 percent last week to 3 percent on Saturday. Hospitalization data showed mixed trends over the weekend as the Baker administration prepares to reestablish field hospitals in case they become necessary.

Confirmed COVID-19 cases among hospitalized patients dropped from 904 on Friday to 893 on Sunday, but the count of cases in intensive care units increased over the same span from 179 to 192. The number of patients intubated also grew from 75 on Friday to 88 on Sunday. Statewide, 69 percent of non-ICU hospital beds and 53 percent of ICU beds were occupied Sunday, including both COVID cases and unrelated hospitalizations.

Massachusetts Police and

health officials to enforce COVID-19 guidelines with hefty fine and non-compliance hotline

The worldwide COVID-19 pandemic has created a year like no other in recent memory. We've heard stories about wildfires in Australia and California, murder hornets, deaths of George Floyd and subsequent riots, protests, and unrest, locust plague in Kenya, economic hit, loss of jobs, closing of businesses, the loss of Kobe Bryant, Sean Connery, Chadwick Boseman, and Alex Trebek, deadly train derailments, plane crashes, earthquakes, and flash floods that return of Ebola to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Beirut chemical explosion, postponement of the Summer Olympics, and while not deadly we had a minor earthquake in Dartmouth. And with how 2020 was unfolding an earthquake surprised, but shocked – pardon the pun – no one.

2020 isn't over: we have Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Eve to celebrate. While a time when the economy gets a boost from all the plane, car, and train travel and families gather around a table – often after not having seen each other in a long while.

Of course, that too will be affected, even ruined in some cases, because well...it's 2020.

How will the COVID-19 effect our holiday celebrations? For starters, Massachusetts health officials have set guidelines:

- No more than 10 people allowed in a household.
- Everyone must leave the gatherings and go home by 9:30pm.
- Wear a mask when not eating or drinking.
- Stay at least six feet apart from others.

- Keep visits short.
- Do not share food, drink, or any utensils.
- For 14 days after the gatherings, minimize contact with other people and only leave home for essential services like going to work, buying groceries, and appointments with doctors.

While proponents of these guidelines feel these will best protect the community by limiting the spread of the coronavirus, opponents call them draconian measures that trample constitutional rights.

Expecting residents to resist the guidelines, Massachusetts has put a plan in place to address it: non-compliance to these specifics will draw the attention of the police and health departments who have been given the authority to enforce them. That means you may be hit with a hefty fine of \$500.

The state is so serious about enforcing these guidelines that they have created a non-compliance hotline where you can call and report your neighbor for violations.

What will you be doing differently, if anything, this year? Let us know in the comments.

New Bedford will pause bar area seating due to Thanksgiving travel

In an effort to stay ahead of rising cases of COVID-19 expected after travel due to the Thanksgiving holiday, the City of New Bedford will prohibit bar area seating over the

long holiday weekend.

Bar seating will pause from Wednesday, November 25 through Sunday, November 29, as travel is expected to increase, including from parts of the country where COVID-19 cases are significantly higher than in Greater New Bedford. This pause in bar seating is intended to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the only public, indoor gathering environment where individuals are in close proximity to one another without masks. It is a proactive step to avoid necessitating further restrictions on gatherings in the weeks following the holiday.

Indoor dining with seating at tables, as well as outdoor dining, will remain in place in accordance with the state's guidelines.

In another step to prevent spread of the virus after the holiday, employers in New Bedford are encouraged to allow employees to work remotely wherever possible for at least the following two weeks.

City government offices will also increase the number of employees working remotely rather than in person over this period. Limited in-person hours at the City Clerk's Office, Treasurer's office, Election Commission Office, and Licensing Board will continue at City Hall Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

"The temporary pause on bar seating is a proactive step to prevent a significant spread of the virus in New Bedford at a time when people are traveling from other parts of the country and could gather indoors at close proximity with many other people, without wearing a mask," said Mayor Jon Mitchell. "The extended Thanksgiving weekend is traditionally one of the busiest occasions for bars, with many typically filled with patrons returning home for the holiday. The influx of holiday travelers and close proximity to one another creates a heightened risk for disease transmission. We don't want to

find ourselves in a far more serious situation in a few weeks, where we need to take more drastic and long-term measures, and look back on what simple steps we could have taken to prevent further transmission of the virus.”

City residents are also encouraged to take advantage of take-out dining at local restaurants to support local businesses. The City’s Health Department strongly urges Thanksgiving celebrations to be limited only to the people in your household, in an effort to prevent the virus from spreading during the holiday.

Mayor Mitchell also strongly encouraged all employers to offer remote work for the two weeks following Thanksgiving to every employee possible.

“Employers should actively seek out ways to accommodate remote work wherever feasible,” he said. “The New Bedford Health Department’s contact tracing data indicates that workplaces are the single largest exposure locations for transmission and spread of the virus. While the data shows that most workplace spread among city residents has occurred at workplaces outside New Bedford, it will be important to limit in-person contact as much as possible after the holiday. The City will continue to keep its non-essential staff as remote as possible, and I encourage businesses with the same ability to allow remote work as much as they can.”

Southeastern Massachusetts, along with the state’s general trend, has seen an increase in transmission of COVID-19 in the past month. New Bedford has stringently enforced strong public health actions to keep residents safe, including at businesses that serve the public. Earlier this year, Mayor Jon Mitchell and the Board of Health announced emergency orders to keep employees safe at their place of work, and special rules concerning industrial workplaces. The orders continue to be enforced and include strong measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in workplaces.

Acushnet to hold pre-Thanksgiving rapid testing clinic for COVID-19

With the support of the Board of Selectmen, we will be holding a RAPID TESTING CLINIC on Wednesday, November 25th from 1pm – 7pm at the parking lot between the schools.

This test will tell you in 15 minutes if you are COVID positive. If you are, stay away from family and friends on Thanksgiving Day! We need to work to make sure that Thanksgiving in Acushnet isn't a "super-spreader event."

Due to the limited number of test kits available, and due to the expected high level of interest, this clinic is for Acushnet residents only.

This video provides details:

Massachusetts opioid overdose deaths on rise during pandemic

By Katie Lannan
State House News Service

An estimated 33 more people died from opioid overdoses in the first nine months of 2020 compared to the same period last year, new Department of Public Health data show.

The 1,517 confirmed and estimated opioid-related overdose deaths through September represent a 2 percent increase from the deaths logged from January through September of 2019, according to figures presented at a Public Health Council meeting Wednesday.

The 2020 numbers cover a time period before and during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, a public health crisis that has rattled the economy, kept many people in their homes for weeks or longer, and disrupted the way all types of services and care are delivered.

If the uptick holds through the rest of 2020, it would mark a break from a recent run of declining overdose deaths year to year.

The DPH report shows a total of 2,020 confirmed and estimated fatal opioid overdoses in 2019, down from 2,033 in 2018, 2,051 in 2017, and a high of 2,102 in 2016.

Public Health Commissioner Dr. Monica Bharel said the latest data shows an increase between 2018 and 2019 in overdose death rates for Black women and for Black and Hispanic men.

She said the overall rate of overdose deaths has stabilized since a 2016 peak, despite an increase in the presence of the powerful synthetic opioid fentanyl.

Fentanyl, which Bharel called “the really deadly ingredient that we’ve seen drive the opioid deaths in this current epidemic,” showed up in 93 percent of toxicology screens for overdose deaths in the first six months of this year. Heroin was present in 16 percent.

“The opioid epidemic continues to impact too many families and

vulnerable populations, who have had to contend with the added fears and stress of the pandemic,” Bharel said. “Be assured that we have not let up on our efforts to address the opioid epidemic. Over these last months, the extraordinary public health challenges presented by the pandemic led us to enact overdose prevention efforts, including expanded telehealth, reducing barriers to treatment, expanding naloxone distribution and receiving federal approval to permit licensed treatment programs to provide take-home doses of medications for opioid use disorder.”

Deirdre Calvert, director of the DPH Bureau of Substance Addiction Services, said officials have been “aggressively maximizing” access to substance use disorder treatment during the pandemic.

She said the ability to take medication home is “very important, because it decreases people at clinics, it increases people being able to stay home, stay isolated, physically distanced.”

As of June, 52 percent of patients seeing opioid treatment providers were receiving take-home doses, compared to an average of 15.6 percent in December 2019.

More than 75,000 naloxone kits were distributed to treatment providers, syringe service programs, community health centers, emergency rooms and houses of correction from March to June, Calvert said.

She said the bureau has also launched its own COVID-19 response team to address challenges like an increased risk of overdoses because of the combination of social isolation, changes to drug supplies, avoidance of treatment because of fear of contracting the coronavirus, and the pandemic’s economic and mental health tolls.

“No matter how much naloxone we flood our system with, if people are using in isolation and nobody’s there to give them

naloxone, it's an issue," Calvert said.