

# 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.

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## **Need a Covid Test? Free Testing is Available in New Bedford & Fall River**

We often get asked “where can I get a Covid test?” Fortunately in both New Bedford and Fall River there are several options. Get tested, stay safe, wear your masks, avoid crowds and wash your hands.

Directly from the state of MA website:

### **Stop the Spread**

The Commonwealth is launching a strategic testing program in communities across Massachusetts that have continued to see a higher number of residents testing positive for COVID-19. You can find all the New Bedford testing sites here: [https://www.mass.gov/info-details/stop-the-spread#new-bedford-](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/stop-the-spread#new-bedford) For Fall River click here: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/stop-the-spread#fall-river->

This program will support the testing of asymptomatic individuals in these communities to help stop the spread of COVID-19. If you are a resident of one of these communities, even if you have no COVID symptoms, please get tested to help stop the spread.

The Commonwealth urges residents of these communities to get tested for COVID-19:

Brockton, Chelsea, Everett, Fall River, Framingham, Holyoke, Lawrence, Lynn, Marlborough, Methuen, New Bedford, Randolph, Revere, Salem, Saugus, Springfield, Winthrop, and Worcester.

**This testing is free for all Massachusetts residents.**

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The Stop the Spread program is intended to provide low barrier, free, and easy to access testing to all Massachusetts residents.

Open to all Massachusetts residents

*Testing is not restricted to residents of the cities where sites are located*

You don't need to have any symptom(s)

No cost to you

Out-of-state residents are not eligible for free testing under the Stop the Spread program

# New Bedford

The information below is subject to change, please check back regularly for updates.

Provider	Testing Location	Testing Hours	Contact	Details	Staff Language Capacity
Greater New Bedford Community Health Center	874 Purchase St.	Monday-Thursday:  8:30 a.m. – 4 p.m.  Friday: 8:30 – 11:30 a.m.	(508) 742-3807	Appointment recommended	All languages
Seven Hills Behavioral Health	New Bedford Fire Station 11:	Monday and Thursday:	(508) 996-0546	Walk-up	English, Spanish, Portuguese, Creole
	754 Brock Avenue	10 a.m. – 3 p.m.  Friday:  11 a.m. – 4 p.m.			
	1183 Acushnet Avenue/ Corner of Sawyer and Acushnet Avenue (Side parking lot)	Tuesday:  1 – 4 p.m.			
	PAACA:  360 Coggeshall Street	Wednesday:  11 a.m. – 2 p.m.			
Alert Ambulance Service Inc	Whale's Tooth Parking Lot:  532 Acushnet Ave	Monday-Sunday:  10 a.m. – 4 p.m.	(401) 654-4679	Drive-up only; no appointment  Note: As you enter the parking lot follow the cones until you reach the trailer. Please remain in the car with windows up until the clinician instructs you to roll the windows down.	English, Portuguese



Surge continues in Massachusetts with over 4,000

# COVID-19 cases over weekend

Matt Murphy

State House News Service

The week began Monday with the state tracking 22,023 active cases of COVID-19 after public health officials reported 4,009 new cases of the coronavirus over the weekend and 43 new confirmed deaths from the disease.

The Department of Public Health reported on Sunday that 568 people were in the hospital for confirmed cases of COVID-19, including 144 patients who were in intensive care units. That was an increase of 55 patients hospitalized with the virus since Friday and 26 patients newly being treated in ICUs around the state.

The state reported a combined 172,858 new molecular tests on Saturday and Sunday, which put the state's seven-day average positivity rate at 2.27 percent. When removing repeat higher education testing from the equation, the positivity rate over the past week was 3.92 percent.

This past weekend was the first since Gov. Charlie Baker put in place a new mandatory mask policy in public, and began imposing curfews on some businesses, forcing them to close by 9:30 p.m. so that people have time to return home and comply with the new statewide advisory that people remain in their homes from 10 p.m. until 5 a.m. The new guidelines were put in place to slow what Baker has newly described as a second surge of COVID-19, with the seven-day average of new confirmed cases up 717 percent from a low of 157 a day and the average number of patients hospitalized with COVID-19 over the past week up 222 percent from a low of 155. The death toll from the virus now stands at 9,923 people with confirmed cases of COVID-19.

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# Three New Bedford businesses fined for violating COVID-19 orders to protect residents

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

El Caribe Restaurant at 884 Brock Avenue, Expo's Convenience Store at 309 Dartmouth Street, and Crown Fried Chicken at 1570 Acushnet Avenue, were each fined for their failure to comply with the regulations. Each business was cited for failure of employees to wear masks.

El Caribe: Fined \$100

Expo's: Fined \$200

Crown Fried Chicken: Fined \$200

Violation orders were issued the week of October 19 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:

# **More than 1,200 coronavirus cases confirmed in Massachusetts over the weekend**

Chris Lisinski

State House News Service

Public health officials reported more than 1,200 additional COVID-19 cases and 20 confirmed deaths in Massachusetts over the weekend, further adding to the state's caseload amid a steady uptick in transmission.

The Department of Public Health confirmed 600 new cases on Saturday from 13,813 individuals newly tested, a positive test rate of about 4.3 percent. On Sunday, the department reported 626 new cases from 18,981 individuals tested, a positive rate of about 3.3 percent. Saturday's report counted 17 confirmed fatalities and Sunday's added another three, bringing the state's total number of deaths among confirmed COVID-19 cases to 9,295. When counting both confirmed and probable COVID-19 deaths, the toll stood at 9,510 as of Sunday.

The number of hospitalized COVID-19 patients dropped by five in Saturday's report and then increased by 22 in Sunday's to 438, which is 30 more than one week earlier. DPH does not specify how many were hospitalized for the highly infectious virus, but Gov. Charlie Baker said last week that an unspecified number were hospitalized for other health reasons

and then tested positive.

The seven-day weighted average positive test rate, which DPH calculates based on all tests that come back positive and not the number of individuals who test positive, remained at 1.1 percent Sunday, where it has been since last week. Amid the increases, Massachusetts communities deemed “lower-risk” based on incidence rates of the highly infectious virus can proceed Monday into the next phase of economic reopening, which includes allowing indoor performance venues to reopen and increasing some business capacity limits.

Twenty-nine municipalities, including the state’s four largest cities, are not permitted to advance and must continue to operate under current restrictions.

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## **10 more Massachusetts cities added to the list of those deemed ‘high risk’ for COVID-19**

10 Massachusetts communities have been added to the list of those at “high risk” for the coronavirus, bringing the total to 23 – a list that includes New Bedford. The state’s designation is determining high-risk is when a town or city’s infection rate reaches 8 or more cases per 100,000 residents.

This, unfortunately, means placing a delay upon the ability of those communities to reach the next phase of re-opening which the state is planning on doing on Monday, October 5th.



The new communities are Attleboro, Avon, Boston, Dracut, Haverhill, Lowell, Lynnfield, Methuen, Middleton, North Andover, and Springfield.

Both Governor Baker and Boston's mayor Marty Walsh have stated that house parties, particularly among 20-something college students, is at the heart of the spike in coronavirus cases the state is experiencing. An astounding 50% of new positive test results are from people under 29-years of age.

Particularly alarming for Attleboro is that their recent spike includes 11 members of the Attleboro Fire Department, including one who is in serious condition.

On Wednesdays, Massachusetts's public health officials 510 additional new cases of the virus and 32 new deaths bringing the state's total to 129,750 confirmed coronavirus cases with and 9,242 deaths.

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## **Over 900 COVID-19 Cases, 41 additional deaths in Massachusetts over weekend**

Chris Lisinski  
State House News Service

The number of patients currently hospitalized for COVID-19 crept up over the weekend as state officials reported more than 900 new confirmed cases of the highly infectious virus and 41 more deaths.

Active hospitalizations rose to 364 in the Department of Public Health's Sunday data report, 26 more than in Friday's

report and 51 more than the Sept. 13 update. Of those counted Sunday, 61 are in intensive care units and 34 are intubated. The rolling average number of active hospitalizations in Sunday's report was 19 percent higher than the record low of 302 set in late August, DPH said.

The department on Saturday reported 569 new confirmed cases from 21,298 individuals newly tested by molecular tests, a positivity rate of about 2.7 percent. Sunday's report confirmed 340 more cases from 17,399 people tested for a positivity rate of about 2 percent. Despite those increases, officials reported no change in the seven-day weighted average positive test rate, which stayed at a record low of 0.8 percent in Sunday's report.

DPH confirmed 26 deaths linked to the virus in Saturday's report and 15 in Sunday's version, pushing the cumulative count of confirmed or probable COVID-19 deaths to 9,310 since the pandemic hit in March.

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## **New Bedford's Mayor Mitchell and BoH update strong public health measures at senior living, long-term care facilities and nursing homes**

Mayor Jon Mitchell and the Board of Health have updated New Bedford's strong public health measures to protect senior living facilities, nursing homes, and long-term care facilities.

Under an updated emergency order in effect August 24, visitation is allowed by appointment only and a daily log must be maintained at these facilities, with contact tracing steps included. All nursing home and long-term care facility visits must also comply with the state's guidance.

The update also allows for several large housing units to be utilized for in-person voting for the upcoming election, as some are designated polling places in the city. Precautions including compliance with state mandates and city regulations around social distancing, the use of masks and/or face coverings, and strict hygiene and sanitation requirements, must remain in effect.

The strong public health measures first announced on April remain in place. Senior living facilities and nursing homes conduct regular wellness checks of all residents including phone calls or door checks, depending on the type of facility, and notification to the Health Department and resident's emergency contact if there is an inability to confirm the resident's wellness. Mandatory stringent hygiene and sanitation precautions remain in effect.

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## **Skunk tests positive for rabies in New Bedford's South End**

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) has notified the New Bedford Health Department of a skunk that has tested positive for rabies in the area of the "Poor Farm," located at the corner of Brock Avenue and Coral Street in the far South End of New Bedford.

The New Bedford Health Department and the New Bedford Animal Control urges neighboring residents who keep their pets outside to contact their veterinarians and make sure that their pets are up-to-date on their rabies vaccination. All pet owners should always ensure their pets' vaccinations are up to date.

Rabies can be found in several different animals in our community, so it is important to understand the signs of rabies in animals which can include:

- Abnormal or aggressive behavior
- Lethargy, weakness, or paralysis
- Self-mutilation
- Seizures
- Excessive salivation
- Difficulty breathing or swallowing

If you encounter an animal that may be infected with rabies, do not approach the animal. Keep a safe distance and call New Bedford Animal Control at 508-991-6366.

Rabies is transmitted through saliva, usually through a bite and is nearly always fatal for humans and animals, so it is important to get treatment right away. If you had contact (bite, scratch, or physical contact) with an animal that may be rabid, thoroughly wash the area, seek medical attention and contact the State Department of Public Health, 24 hours a day/7 days a week, at 617-983-6800.

You can protect your pets by:

- Vaccinate Pets – The rabies vaccine for dogs, cats, and ferrets is a requirement under Massachusetts law. Contact your veterinarian or a rabies clinic to ensure vaccinations are up to date.
- Keep Pets Close – Always watch pets when they are outdoors and keep them away from wildlife. Use a leash, keep

pets in fenced areas, and never let them roam free.

- Spay and Neuter – The CDC suggests spaying and neutering pets to reduce the potential for unwanted animals without vaccinations.

- Keep Wildlife Wild – Never keep a wild animal as a pet, it is illegal in Massachusetts.

- Secure Property – Bring all outdoor water or food bowls inside, cover garbage, and repair holes in chimneys, cellars, porches, and other areas. This will keep wildlife away from your property and out of your home.

The New Bedford Animal Control will also be holding its annual Rabies Clinic at Brooklawn and Hazelwood Parks on November 7. Vaccinations will be available for cats, dogs, and ferrets for \$15 per animal.

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## **Algae bloom detected in Sassaquin Pond; humans and pets should avoid contact with pond water**

An algae bloom has been detected at Sassaquin Pond, and residents and pets are advised to avoid direct contact with the water including wading or swimming until lab results can rule out the presence of dangerous bacteria.

Cyanobacteria occurs naturally in freshwater, mostly in late summer and early fall in Massachusetts. Under certain conditions, a concentrated area of cyanobacteria can produce toxins that can cause illness in humans and illness or

fatalities in dogs and pets.

The New Bedford Health Department laboratory and state Department of Public Health laboratory are analyzing the results of water samples from Sassaquin Pond to detect its quality. Until an announcement is made, residents and pets are advised to remain out of the water at Sassaquin Pond.

More information about naturally occurring algae blooms can be found [here:](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/harmful-algae-blooms-in-freshwater-bodies)  
<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/harmful-algae-blooms-in-freshwater-bodies>.