

New Bedford snow emergency parking ban lifted

The citywide snow emergency parking ban is lifted as of 5 p.m. today, Jan. 7.

City officials implemented the parking ban at 10 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 6, as the National Weather Service issued a Winter Storm Warning for the region, including New Bedford.

City offices and public schools were closed Friday, ahead of the storm which dropped several inches of snow on the city and region. The storm's morning arrival affected the Friday morning commute and made travel difficult on slick roads.

The Winter Storm Warning ended at 4 p.m. Friday, as skies cleared. Saturday's forecast is sunny and cold. With the ban lifted, residents are asked to please remove their vehicles from municipal and school parking lots, to ensure these lots can be cleared.

The parking ban is designed to allow City workers to efficiently remove snow from New Bedford roadways, and enable public safety vehicles and residents to travel safely.

To further increase public safety during storm events, some areas are designated for a double-sided parking ban. Streets with parking prohibited on both sides are selected because they are major routes for ambulances, school buses, and SRTA buses, or have a history of large vehicles being unable to successfully navigate due to street narrowness.

Massachusetts Education Commissioner To Make Mask Mandate Decision Next Week

By Michael P. Norton
State House News Service

As COVID-19 case counts continue to rise across Massachusetts, including its schools, a decision about whether to extend the mask mandate in public schools will be announced next week, Education Commissioner Jeff Riley told local school officials.

A Department of Elementary and Secondary Education spokeswoman confirmed Thursday morning that Riley informed school superintendents of his plans during a phone call with them on Wednesday.

In October, Riley notified school districts he was extending the mask requirement in K-12 public schools through Jan. 15, citing consultations with medical experts and state health officials. Education Secretary James Peyser said the extension represented “another big step forward in our efforts to keep schools safe for our kids” and would allow more time for the elementary school students to receive the COVID-19 vaccine.

Education officials say masking, testing and vaccinations have made school environments safe, and Riley had planned last month to make a call on whether to lift or extend the mask mandate but decided to wait.

“With the new arrival of omicron, it seems too soon to make a decision at this time,” Riley said Dec. 17. “The medical community’s asked for some additional time so that we have better facts on the ground. They’re learning a lot very quickly about the omicron variant. We’ll wait and see, and see what the situation looks like in early January for a

decision."

Since then, COVID-19 case counts and hospitalizations have exploded across Massachusetts. Schools have stayed open for the most part, although districts coming out of the holiday break are seeing more virus-related absences that have sidelined students, teachers and the other support staff necessary to school functions.

In October, when Riley last extended the mask mandate, state education officials reported 1,804 COVID-19 cases among students during the week of Oct. 14 through Oct. 20, and 350 among staff. In the most recent report, covering the week of Dec. 16 through Dec. 22, 8,576 student cases were reported and 1,544 among staff.

The next report on student and staff infections is due out later Thursday.

In the face of rising infections and an updated mask advisory from state public health officials, education officials have stood by their rule that allows the mask mandate to be lifted, at the discretion of local officials, at middle and high schools with 80 percent of their students and staff vaccinated.

According to the most recent data available, state education officials have approved requests to lift the mask mandate from 31 schools, with seven other requests still processing.

The Department of Public Health on Dec. 21 issued an advisory that recommends, but does not require, all residents to wear masks in indoor public spaces. Massachusetts had varying forms of a mask mandate in place for much of the first year during the pandemic. DPH replaced the mandate with an advisory in May, about a month before Baker ended the COVID-19 state of emergency, and Baker has resisted calls to reinstitute a mask mandate.

"In response to the rise in cases and hospitalizations we are seeing in the Commonwealth and as we learn more about the emerging omicron variant, the Department of Public Health advises that all residents, regardless of vaccination status, wear a mask or face covering when indoors and not in their own home," state Health and Human Service Secretary Marylou Sudders said last month when the advisory was reintroduced. "We particularly urge this recommendation if you have a weakened immune system or if you are at increased risk for severe disease because of your age or an underlying medical condition, or if someone in your household has a weakened immune system, is at increased risk for severe disease, or unvaccinated."

The mask advisory was issued on the same day that Gov. Charlie Baker announced he was activating hundreds of Massachusetts National Guard personnel to assist overwhelmed health care providers and requiring hospitals to postpone or cancel non-essential elective procedures in order to preserve hospital bed capacity.

The mask advisory immediately generated calls for a mask mandate, and Baker on Dec. 21 defended the advisory in part by saying that people who have been both vaccinated and boosted against COVID-19 face an "extremely low" risk from the fast-spreading omicron variant.

School districts this year are required to provide in-person learning to all students. The school mask mandate includes exceptions for students who cannot wear a mask due to medical conditions or behavioral needs.

In August, the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education gave Riley the authority, at his request, to mandate masks for all public K-12 students, educators, and staff through at least Oct. 1. So far, Riley has twice extended his initial mandate.

Marion, Mattapoisett, Rochester Fire Departments respond to structure fire on Wareham Road

"Marion Fire/EMS responded to a reported structure on wareham Rd.

On arrival crew's were meet with heavy smoke from the rear of the building. Engine -1 made an aggressive interior attack and fire was knocked down quickly minimizing the damage.

Thank you to our mutual aid partners Mattapoisett Fire Rescue Wareham Fire Department Rochester Fire.

Responding Marion units:

- C-1
- A-3
- Engine 1
- Engine -2
- Ladder -1

Mutual Aid

- Wareham Fire
- Mattapoisett fire
- Rochester Fire
- Marion police" -Marion Fire/EMS.



Marion Fire/EMS photo.



Marion Fire/EMS photo.



Marion Fire/EMS photo.



Marion Fire/EMS photo.

Former Member of New Bedford Latin Kings Chapter Sentenced for Drug Trafficking and Manufacturing

former member of the New Bedford Chapter of the Massachusetts Almighty Latin King and Queen Nation (Latin Kings) was sentenced yesterday on drug charges.

Tanairy Ruiz, a/k/a “Queen Tanairy,” 34, was sentenced by U.S. Senior District Court Judge Rya W. Zobel to time served (approx. 30 days) and three years of supervised release. On Sept. 8, 2021, Ruiz pleaded guilty to conspiracy to manufacture, distribute and possess with intent to distribute cocaine and cocaine base.

The Latin Kings are a violent criminal enterprise comprised of thousands of members across the United States. The Latin Kings adhere to a national manifesto, employ an internal judiciary and use a sophisticated system of communication to maintain the hierarchy of the organization. As alleged in court documents, the gang uses drug distribution to generate revenue, and engages in violence against witnesses and rival gangs to further its influence and to protect its turf.

Ruiz conspired with other Latin Kings members to manufacture and distribute cocaine base throughout the City of New Bedford. Ruiz resided in one of the many “trap houses” or multi-unit apartment buildings in New Bedford that were controlled by the Latin Kings. Ruiz’s apartment was used as a location where cocaine was “cooked” or manufactured into cocaine base.

In December 2019, a federal grand jury returned an indictment alleging racketeering conspiracy, drug conspiracy and firearms

charges against 62 leaders, members and associates of the Latin Kings. Ruiz is the 41st defendant to be sentenced in the case.

Acting United States Attorney Nathaniel R. Mendell; Joseph R. Bonavolonta, Special Agent in Charge of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Boston Division; Commissioner Carol Mici of the Massachusetts Department of Correction; and New Bedford Police Chief Joseph C. Cordeiro made the announcement. Valuable assistance was also provided by the FBI North Shore Gang Task Force and the Bristol County and Suffolk County District Attorney's Offices. Assistant U.S. Attorneys Philip A. Mallard and Lauren Gruber of Mendell's Criminal Division prosecuted the case.

This effort is part of an Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Forces (OCDETF) operation. OCDETF identifies, disrupts, and dismantles the highest-level criminal organizations that threaten the United States using a prosecutor-led, intelligence-driven, multi-agency approach. Additional information about the OCDETF Program can be found at <https://www.justice.gov/OCDETF>.

Scott Kruger Appointed New Bedford Fire Department Chief

Mayor Jon Mitchell has announced his appointment of Acting Fire Chief Scott Kruger as Fire Chief for the City of New Bedford.

In New Bedford, candidates for fire chief are selected based on performance on a state-administered Civil Service examination and assessment process. Results from the most

recent Civil Service exam were recently released, with Kruger the top-scoring candidate. Mayor Mitchell has asked the City Council to confirm Kruger's appointment.

Kruger is a veteran of the New Bedford Fire Department and has 31 years of City service, most recently including his position as Acting Fire Chief since August 2020. In this role, Kruger has led the Fire Department capably through some of the most challenging periods of the pandemic.

Kruger began his service to the City in 1991, as an emergency medical technician with New Bedford Emergency Medical Services. He joined the New Bedford Fire Department two years later and steadily advanced in rank, serving as a firefighter from 1993-2001, as a lieutenant from 2001-06, as captain from 2006-10, as a district chief from 2010-19, and as acting deputy fire chief from February 2019 until he assumed the Acting Chief role in August 2020.

Kruger has received specialized training across a number of fire safety areas in the course of his career, including a degree in fire science technology from Bristol Community College in 2000 and multiple coursework at the National Fire Academy in Emmitsburg, Maryland.

As a licensed EMT-paramedic, Kruger's medical training has also translated into local impact, with Kruger having played an important role, for example, in ensuring that emergency response vehicles in New Bedford are equipped with EpiPens, lifesaving devices that serve people suffering severe allergic reactions, as well as with the drug hydroxocobalamin, in packages known as cyano-kits, which aid in the treatment of severe smoke inhalation.

"Chief Kruger exemplifies what it means to be a professional firefighter. His long record of service to the City of New Bedford speaks for itself," Mayor Mitchell said.

Mitchell added, "The Chief's strong leadership skills and

experience have proven invaluable during the most difficult days of the pandemic, as he's worked tirelessly to ensure the health and safety of our residents and the firefighters under his command."

18-year old Brockton man arrested with loaded handgun in New Bedford

New Bedford police have arrested a man for firearms charges.

On January 5, 2021, at 11:20 p.m., New Bedford police narcotics and gang detectives were patrolling the west end sector of the city, focusing their attention on the Temple Landing housing development.

During this time, a traffic stop was conducted on a vehicle containing 4 occupants. During a subsequent search, one male was found to have a loaded Sig P320 pistol in his jacket along with 21 rounds of 9mm ammunition. The male was identified as JUSUE DASILVA, 18, of 108 Newbury Street #2, of Brockton.

DASILVA was taken into custody and charged with carrying a loaded firearm and ammunition within a high-capacity magazine without a license.

The New Bedford police department is committed in its efforts to remove illegal guns from the streets before they can be used with tragic outcomes. If you have any information concerning illegal activity, you can provide it to us anonymously at 508-99-27463 or at our department website.

New Bedford announces parking ban, office closures in preparation for Friday's winter storm

New Bedford Prepares for Winter Storm

Emergency parking ban effective at 10 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 6
City offices, libraries, Buttonwood Park Zoo closed Friday, Jan. 7

COVID-19 Testing Canceled at Fire Station 11 on Friday, Jan. 7

The National Weather Service has issued a Winter Storm Warning for southeastern Massachusetts, including New Bedford, in effect from 1 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Friday, Jan. 7. The National Weather Service predicts total snow accumulations of 6 to 8 inches, with localized accumulations of up to 10 inches possible. Storm conditions are expected to make travel very difficult, particularly during the Friday morning commute.

Citywide Snow Emergency Parking Ban Effective at 10 p.m. on Thursday, Jan. 6

In preparation for the approaching snowstorm, the City of New Bedford has announced a citywide snow emergency parking ban to take effect at 10 p.m. on Thursday, Jan. 6.

The parking ban will be strictly enforced and will remain in effect for 48 hours, unless lifted or further extended by City officials. The parking ban is designed to allow City workers to efficiently remove snow from New Bedford roadways, and enable public safety vehicles and residents to travel safely.

While the snow emergency parking ban is in effect, parking is permitted on the north side of all streets going east and west, and is permitted on the east side of all streets going north and south. The permitted side of the street is typically the side opposite of the fire hydrants.

Please note that on streets that are normally posted for parking on one side of the street only, residents are to obey the signs as usual. Vehicles should never be parked within ten (10) feet of a fire hydrant or twenty (20) feet from a corner as required by law, regardless of whether a snow ban is in effect.

Double-sided Parking Ban Areas

To increase public safety during storm events, the areas designated for a double-sided parking ban include sections of numerous streets (listed below), in addition to the Downtown and Acushnet Avenue Business Districts, where double-sided bans have been implemented in years past. The street sections were selected because they are major routes for ambulances, school buses, and SRTA buses, and have a history of large vehicles being unable to successfully navigate due to the narrowness of the street.

During a snow emergency parking ban, therefore, no parking is permitted on either side of the street in the following areas:

- Wood St (Acushnet Ave to Belleville Ave)
- Acushnet Ave (Tarkiln Hill Rd to Coggeshall St)
- Nash Rd (Acushnet Ave to Belleville Ave)
- Ashley Blvd (Nash Rd to Coggeshall St)
- County St (Purchase St to Cove Rd)
- Cottage St (Durfee St to Union St)
- Mill St (Kempton St to Pleasant St)
- Kempton St (Brownell Ave to Pleasant St)
- The Downtown Business District (County St to JFK Blvd, Kempton St to Walnut St)

- Dartmouth St (Allen St to Matthew St)
- Rivet St (Dartmouth St to JFK Blvd)

Violations of the snow emergency parking ban will be subject to ticketing at \$50 per ticket, and towing at full cost to the owner of the vehicle towed. The vehicle owner is also responsible for the full cost of storage for any towed vehicle.

The City of New Bedford has designated the following areas as preferred parking areas for residents in need of off-street parking while the emergency snow parking ban is in effect:

Victory Park – Brock Avenue

Hazelwood Park – Brock Avenue

Cove Street Parking Lot – Cove Street and Morton Court

Orchard Street at Camara Soccer Field

Buttonwood Park Parking Area – Hawthorn Street Side and Lake Street Side

Coggeshall Street Parking Lot – Coggeshall Street and Acushnet Avenue

Sawyer Street Parking Lot – Between Sawyer Street and Beetle Street

Brooklawn Park Parking Area – Brooklawn Street (South Side)

Riverside Park Lot – Coffin Avenue

Coffin Avenue Lot- Across from Taber Mills Apartments

Former AVX site on Belleville Avenue at Hadley Street

Former Philips Avenue School – 249 Phillips Avenue

Elm Street Garage

Zeiterion Garage – 688 Purchase Street

New Bedford High School – 230 Hathaway Boulevard

Keith Middle School – 225 Hathaway Boulevard

Normandin Middle School – 81 Felton Street

Roosevelt Middle School – 119 Fredrick Street

Charles S Ashley Elementary School – 122 Rochambeau Street

Elizabeth Carter Brooks Elementary School – 212 Nemasket Street

Elwyn G Campbell Elementary School – 145 Essex Street

Sgt Wm H Carney Academy Elementary School – 247 Elm Street
Lot at intersection of Elm and Cottage (Southeast Corner)
James B Congdon Elementary School – 50 Hemlock Street
John B DeValles Elementary School – 120 Katherine Street
Alfred J Gomes Elementary School – 286 South Second Street
Ellen R Hathaway Elementary School – 256 Court Street
Hayden/McFadden Elementary School – 361 Cedar Grove Street
Horatio A Kempton Elementary School – 135 Shawmut Avenue
Abraham Lincoln Elementary School – 445 Ashley Boulevard
Carlos Pacheco Elementary School – 261 Mt. Pleasant Street
John Avery Parker Elementary School – 705 County Street
Casmir Pulaski Elementary School – 1097 Braley Road
Thomas R Rodman Elementary School – 497 Mill Street
William H Taylor Elementary School – 620 Brock Avenue
SEA LAB/John Hannigan Elementary School – 91 Portland Street
Jireh Swift Elementary School – 2203 Acushnet Avenue
Betsey B Winslow Elementary School – 561 Allen Street
Libraries, City Hall and city offices, Buttonwood Park Zoo
Closed Friday

City Hall, city offices, public libraries, and Buttonwood Park Zoo will be closed on Friday, Jan. 7, due to the storm. Senior centers are closed due to the pandemic.

Trash Pickup for Ward 6 in the South End Delayed to Saturday, Jan. 8

Residents of Ward 6 in the South End can keep their trash barrels stowed away Friday morning, as trash pickup will be delayed to Saturday.

New Bedford Regional Airport

New Bedford Regional Airport will remain in operation as conditions permit. Passengers should contact their air carriers directly to confirm their flight status because widespread cancellations are expected.

Sand Available to City Residents at Several Locations

The Department of Public Infrastructure has made sand

available to city residents at several locations throughout the city. Residents are advised to bring their own small container to collect the sand at any of the following locations:

- Corner of Liberty Street and Smith Street
- Brooklawn Park parking lot, next to Brooklawn Senior Center
- Parking lot at 773 South 1st Street, across from Dennison Memorial Community Center

COVID-19 Testing Site Canceled in the South End

COVID-19 testing provided by Seven Hills Behavioral Health at former Fire Station 11 at 754 Brock Ave. in the South End has been canceled for Friday, Jan. 7, due to the expected winter storm.

COVID-19 Testing at South End New Bedford Fire Station Canceled Friday, Jan. 7, Due to Storm

Former Fire Station on Brock Avenue Will Add Testing Hours on Tuesdays Starting Next Week

COVID-19 testing provided by Seven Hills Behavioral Health at former Fire Station 11 in the South End has been canceled for Friday, Jan. 7, due to the expected winter storm.

With several inches of snow expected and lines of people extending well outside the station in recent days, because of increased demand around the holidays and the emergence of the

omicron variant, site organizers have closed Friday's testing clinic to ensure safety for all.

Seven Hills will add testing hours, however, at the Brock Avenue location on Tuesdays starting next week. As of Jan. 11, Seven Hills will offer testing at former Fire Station 11 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Tuesdays. Vaccine services will not be available at the station on Tuesdays, due to the extended testing hours.

Project Beacon's appointment-based COVID-19 testing at New Bedford Regional Airport—part of the state's Stop the Spread program—continues to offer COVID-19 testing at 1569 Airport Road, at these times:

Sundays, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Mondays, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Tuesdays, 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Thursdays, 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.

That schedule will continue through March. Appointments for free COVID-19 tests can be made at beacontesting.com. Airport officials ask that people reach the site via the airport's side entrance on Downey Street.

Other testing sites in New Bedford and surrounding towns can be found on the state's Stop the Spread website, www.mass.gov/info-details/find-a-covid-19-test.

Upcoming testing locations in New Bedford include:

Sunday, Jan. 9:

Project Beacon at New Bedford Regional Airport (1569 Airport Road) – 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Monday, Jan. 10:

Project Beacon at New Bedford Regional Airport (1569 Airport Road) – 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Former Fire Station 11 (754 Brock Ave.) – 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Tuesday, Jan. 11:

Project Beacon at New Bedford Regional Airport (1569 Airport Road) – 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Former Fire Station 11 (754 Brock Ave.) – 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Wednesday, Jan. 12:

Project Beacon at New Bedford Regional Airport (1569 Airport Road) – 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Seven Hills at PAACA (360 Coggleshall St.) – 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Thursday, Jan. 13:

Project Beacon at New Bedford Regional Airport (1569 Airport Road) – 8 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Former Fire Station 11 (754 Brock Ave.) – 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Friday, Jan. 14:

Former Fire Station 11 (754 Brock Ave.) – 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Sunday, Jan. 16:

Project Beacon at New Bedford Regional Airport (1569 Airport Road) – 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

New Bedford Public Schools closed January 7, 2022

In anticipation of the upcoming winter storm projections for tomorrow, all New Bedford Public Schools and administrative offices will be closed on Friday, January 7, 2022.

- NO classes
- NO after-school activities
- NO virtual meetings

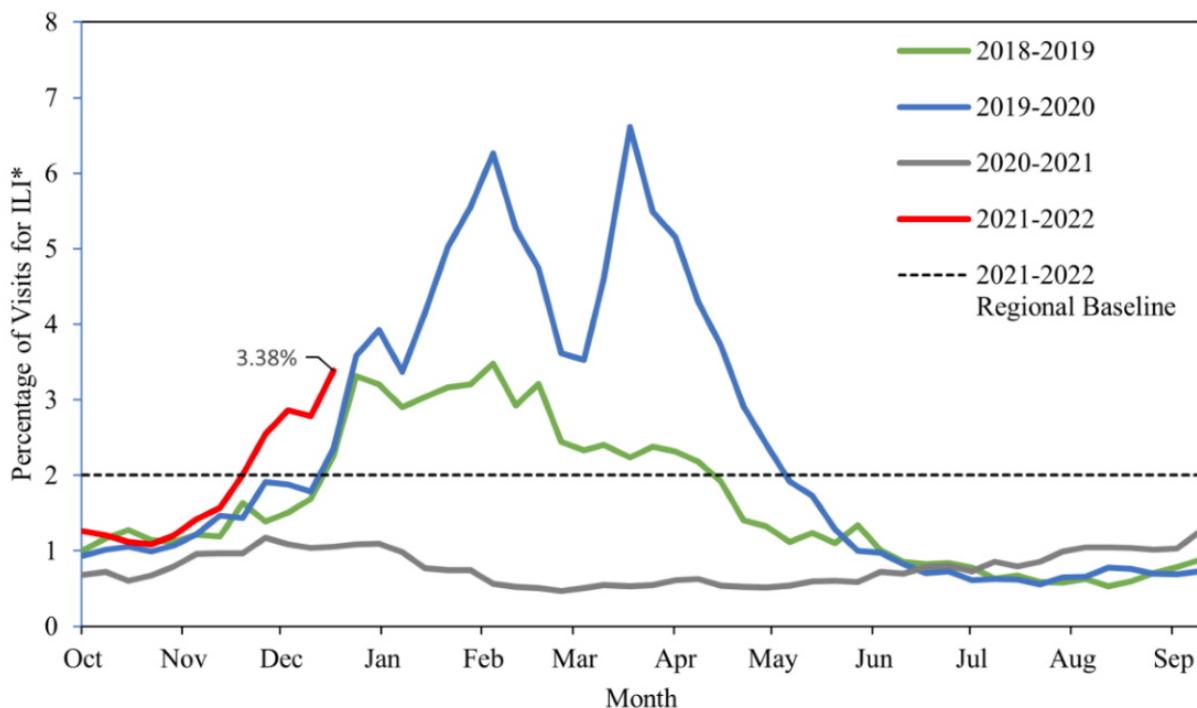
Superintendent Thomas Anderson stated, “In anticipation of the first significant snowfall of the year, tomorrow, Friday,

January 7, 2022, ALL schools, and ALL school and central administrative offices will be closed. This cancellation is out of concern for the safety of both our students and our staff who must drive in these conditions.”

Massachusetts Flu Activity High For First Time Since April 2020

Amid an aggressive surge in COVID-19 infections, Massachusetts is also grappling with the early months of what is shaping up to be an active season for the flu.

**Figure 1. Percentage of Visits for Influenza-Like Illness (ILI) Reported by Sentinel Provider Sites in Massachusetts
October 3, 2021 - December 25, 2021**



*Influenza-like illness (ILI, defined by fever $\geq 100^{\circ}\text{F}$ and cough and/or sore throat), as reported by Massachusetts sentinel surveillance sites. ILI reported by sentinel sites which report via ED syndromic surveillance include cases meeting the ILI definition and cases with a diagnosis indicating influenza infection. The 2021-2022 regional baseline is 2.0%, for more information on how this baseline is calculated please visit <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/weekly/overview.htm>.

A group of health care providers reported that nearly 3.4 percent of visits in the week ending Dec. 25 were for influenza-like illness, a higher rate for that point in the annual flu season than the past three seasons. [DPH]

Influenza-like illness activity reached the highest of four severity ratings in the week from Dec. 19 to Dec. 25, the most recent period with a Department of Public Health report available. That's the earliest point in the season that the Bay State hit that level in several years.

The 93 health care facilities that serve as "sentinel sites" to monitor the flu reported that 3.38 percent of visits they saw in the week ending on Christmas Day were for influenza-like illness, well above the 2 percent regional baseline that estimates a typical impact and higher than the same week in any of the past three years.

DPH defines influenza-like illness as a fever of at least 100 degrees Fahrenheit in addition to a cough and/or a sore throat – symptoms similar to those that COVID-19 patients experience.

"Many more people are infected with influenza than are tested for influenza," the department noted in its report. "ILI is used throughout the regular influenza season to help track influenza activity in individuals who are not tested, as trends in ILI have been shown to mirror influenza trends."

While activity has been robust so far, the intensity of influenza illness has not climbed at the same rate. DPH called the severity of influenza "moderate," the second-lowest of four options, in the week ending Dec. 25.

About 0.62 percent of hospitalizations in Massachusetts were associated with influenza that week, in line with the same point during the 2019-2020 season and below this time in the 2018-2019 season.

So far, the flu's effect has varied by region.

DPH said central Massachusetts is experiencing the most potent impact, while the northeast, southeast and inner metro Boston regions also face high influenza-like illness activity. Boston itself, the outer metro Boston area and western Massachusetts are reporting moderate influenza-like illness activity, DPH said.

DPH's most recent report, published on Friday, also marks the first time state health officials have deemed influenza-like illness activity high since the week ending April 18, 2020, early on in the COVID-19 pandemic that upended the world.

For the entire October 2020 to May 2021 season, when pandemic precautions such as capacity restrictions and social distancing were more common, DPH said its sentinel providers reported "minimal" flu activity.

In the 2019-2020 season, DPH declared flu activity high across the state for the first time the week ending Dec. 28, 2019.

Most positive influenza specimens recently reported by health care facilities in Massachusetts are influenza Type A, and H3N2 is currently the predominant strain, DPH said.

As they prepare for an uptick in flu illness, health care providers in Massachusetts and across the country are already struggling under the weight of the ongoing COVID-19 surge and persistent staffing shortages. A group of physicians and nurses on Monday cautioned that the state's emergency departments are at "critical capacity" and that "things will get worse."

The flu season also continues to ramp up in other parts of the country. In its own report covering the week ending Dec. 25, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said the eastern and central United States are "seeing the majority of viruses reported" while western states are reporting lower levels of influenza virus circulation.

Most influenza A (H3N2) infections have occurred among children and young adults between the ages of 5 and 24 years old, the CDC said, but the “proportion of infections occurring among adults age 25 years and older has been increasing.”

The CDC deemed Massachusetts and 15 other states and jurisdictions to have “high” influenza-like illness activity in the most recent week of surveillance. Three others – Georgia, North Dakota and New Jersey – had “very high” activity in that span, the CDC said.

Hospitalizations for influenza are on the rise, too, while CDC cautioned of “early signs that flu vaccination uptake is down this season compared to last.”

“The flu season is just getting started,” the national agency wrote. “There’s still time to get vaccinated. An annual flu vaccine is the best way to protect against flu and its potentially serious complications. CDC recommends everyone 6 months and older get a flu vaccine.”