

# Fully vaccinated population in Massachusetts nears 1.5 million

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Nearly 1.5 million people in Massachusetts are now fully vaccinated against COVID-19 and almost 3 million vaccine doses have been administered here, but a potentially more contagious mutant form of the virus first identified in Brazil is now spreading through the state.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control counts 58 cases of the P.1 COVID-19 variant, which is thought to be more contagious and able to reinfect those who have already defeated the coronavirus, in Massachusetts – more than any other state in the country. This weekend, researchers from MIT's Broad Institute and Harvard released data detailing 54 of the Massachusetts cases of the P.1 variant, which was first identified here in a Barnstable County woman who tested positive for COVID-19 in late February. They found that 43 of the 54 P.1 cases were likely connected to one superspreader event.

"While our understanding of the increased transmissibility of the P.1 variant is still unfolding, the large cluster of identical and nearly identical genomes – a pattern of genetic diversity consistent with superspreading – highlights the ongoing risk of rapid spread of SARS-CoV-2, and in particular for more transmissible lineages," the researchers wrote. "The extent of community transmission of P.1 in Massachusetts and across the US is currently unknown, however, it is likely that the P.1 variant is already or will soon be circulating in communities and ongoing surveillance will be critical to

understanding the trajectory and impact of the P.1 variant.”

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health reported 2,263 new cases of COVID-19 and announced 30 recent COVID-19 deaths on Saturday, raising the state’s total case count to 605,055 and the death toll to 17,281 people. There were 707 people hospitalized with COVID-19 as of Saturday’s update from DPH. Figures that would have been reported Sunday will be released Monday afternoon, DPH has said. Though there was no reporting of new cases and deaths Sunday, DPH did report that the number of people fully vaccinated in Massachusetts had climbed to 1,478,520 with 3,904,179 total vaccine doses administered.