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PUBLIC HEALTH WEEKLY UPDATE:

COVID-19

April 30, 2021

Below is a summary related to the Town of Belmont's response to the COVID-19 (Coronavirus) pandemic. The Town of Belmont is committed to providing information including this weekly update on the COVID-19 situation. Numbers related to COVID-19 and other pertinent information are updated regularly on the [Town's website](#).

The Town of Belmont currently has 1125 *cumulative* confirmed cases of COVID-19, which is an increase of 19 cases since our April 23 report. There have been a total of 80 COVID-19 related deaths to date for the Town of Belmont, all of which are confirmed by filed death certificates with the Town Clerk's Office. Due to the new case count over the past two weeks, our average daily incidence of 7.8/100k, and our 0.80 percent positivity, Belmont is still **Green** this week according to the color designation metrics (*Less than 10 daily average cases/100k and greater than 10 new cases overall, as reported in the last two weeks*).

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) continues to provide weekly reports of COVID-19 data by city or town as part of its [Dashboard for COVID-19 Cases, Quarantine and Monitoring](#). MDPH updates this list once a week on Thursdays.

Belmont Town-Level COVID-19 Dashboard

Find the Dashboard at the top of the town COVID-19 Page: <https://www.belmont-ma.gov/home/urgent-alerts/covid-19-information-for-the-town-of-belmont-find-all-updates-here>

Belmont Public Schools COVID-19 Dashboard

Find the Dashboard at the top of the town COVID-19 Page: <https://www.belmont-ma.gov/home/urgent-alerts/covid-19-information-for-the-town-of-belmont-find-all-updates-here>

Phase IV, Step 2 Industries and Gathering Changes:

This week, the Baker-Polito Administration announced that Massachusetts will reopen some outdoor Phase 4, Step 2 industries effective May 10th and put plans in place for further reopening on May 29th and August 1st. The Administration continues to take steps to reopen the Commonwealth's economy with public health metrics trending in a positive direction. This includes drops in average daily COVID cases and hospitalizations. Massachusetts remains first in the nation for first vaccine doses and total doses administered per capita, among states with more than 5 million people. On March 22, Massachusetts loosened capacity restrictions and advanced to Step 1 of Phase IV of the reopening plan. Since then, case rates dropped by 20%. The positivity rate has dropped to the lowest levels recorded since last summer.



Face Coverings Order Update:

Effective **April 30th**, the Face Coverings Order will be relaxed for some outdoor settings. Face coverings will only be required outside in public when it is not possible to socially distance, and at other times required by sector-specific guidance. *Face coverings will still be required at all times in indoor public places. Face coverings will also continue to be required at all times at **events** (i.e. sports events, music festivals, etc.), whether held indoors or outdoors and whether held in a public space or private home, except for when eating or drinking.* At smaller gatherings in private homes, face coverings are recommended but not required. The \$300 fine as an enforcement mechanism will be eliminated.

For more information, visit mass.gov/reopening.

Effective Monday, May 10th:

- Large venues such as indoor and outdoor stadiums, arenas and ballparks currently open as part of Phase 4, Step 1 at 12% will be permitted to increase capacity to 25%.
- The Commonwealth will reopen some outdoor Phase 4, Step 2 industries including amusement parks, theme parks and outdoor water parks that will be permitted to operate at a 50% capacity after submitting safety plans to the Department of Public Health.
- Road races and other large, outdoor organized amateur or professional group athletic events will be permitted to take place with staggered starts after submitting safety plans to a local board of health or the DPH.
- Youth and adult amateur sports tournaments will be allowed for moderate and high risk sports.
- Singing will also be permitted indoors with strict distancing requirements at performance venues, restaurants, event venues and other businesses.

Effective May 29th:

- Subject to public health and vaccination data, **gathering limits** will increase to 200 people indoors and 250 people outdoors for event venues, public settings and private settings.
- Subject to public health and vaccination data, additional Phase 4, Step 2 industries will be permitted to open including:
- Street festivals, parades and agricultural festivals, at 50% of their previous capacity and after submitting safety plans to the local board of health.
- Bars, beer gardens, breweries, wineries and distilleries, will be subject to restaurant rules with seated service only, a 90 minute limit and no dance floors.
- Subject to public health and vaccination data, the restaurant guidance will be updated to eliminate the requirement that food be served with alcohol and to increase the maximum table size to 10.

Effective August 1st:

Subject to public health and vaccination data, remaining industries will be permitted to open including:

- Dance clubs, and nightclubs
- Saunas, hot-tubs, steam rooms at fitness centers, health clubs and other facilities
- Indoor water parks
- Ball pits
- All industry restrictions will be lifted at that time, and capacity will increase to 100% for all industries, with businesses encouraged to continue following best practices. The gathering limit will be rescinded.

Depending on vaccine distribution and public health data, the Administration may consider re-evaluating the August 1st date.

Finding a COVID-19 Vaccine Appointment

As of April 16th, all residents 16+ are now eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. Residents can preregister to book an appointment at a mass vaccination site at mass.gov/COVIDVaccine. Appointments will be offered based on eligibility and available appointments nearby. It is expected that more sites will come continue to come online.

To accommodate residents who are unable to use the form, the preregistration form allows family members, caregivers or other companions to fill out the form on behalf of someone else. Residents who do not have internet access or someone to fill the form out for them can call 2-1-1 to preregister.

A complete list of vaccine locations, including retail pharmacies, health care providers, and other can be found here: <https://vaxfinder.mass.gov/> or by searching via map here: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-vaccination-locations#map-of-vaccination-sites->

The Administration has received assurances from the federal government that the vaccine supply to the state is expected to continue to increase. Depending on supply, it could take weeks for people to find an appointment, or be notified that an appointment is available at a mass vaccination site.

Vaccinating Homebound Residents in Belmont

In partnership with our neighboring Health Departments, Belmont is participating an effort backed by the state to provide in-home vaccination to eligible homebound residents. The state is supplying vaccine specifically for this purpose, so the Health Department is currently compiling a list to ascertain the number of residents who need and are interested in this opportunity.

In order to participate in this program, individuals are asked to identify their eligibility in two ways. First, they must be 16+ years of age. Second, they must meet the Department of Public Health's definition of a homebound resident. The criteria to identify as a homebound resident for these purposes are listed below:

- Individuals who are not able to leave their home to get to a vaccination site without significant assistance
- These individuals either:
 - Require ambulance or two person assist to leave the home
 - Are not able to leave the home for medical appointments under normal circumstances
 - Have considerable difficulty and/or require significant support to leave the home for medical appointments

If you or someone you know qualifies as a homebound individual, please fill out the Belmont Health Department's Vaccine Survey on the town website, or call our office at 617-993-2720. This survey has been updated to gather more information on homebound residents. The direct survey link can be found here: <https://forms.gle/7fo8ztJbRBU2aCKL9>

Belmont COVID-19 Vaccination and Planning

For the time being, Belmont will only be able to offer vaccine to homebound residents. At this time, we do not have any information on if or when we might receive any additional first doses for local



clinics for the general public. We are strongly encouraging residents who are not homebound to visit the state's website at mass.gov/COVIDVaccine to pursue available options.

Mask Reminders

Here are some tips about how to properly wear your face coverings, and what type of face coverings are recommended. As a reminder, face coverings are required when you are outside of your home in public and cannot social distance, as per [Governor's COVID-19 Order #55](#).

CDC Mask Guidance: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/about-face-coverings.html>

Mask up MA! : <https://www.mass.gov/news/mask-up-ma>

Double Masking

As new variants of COVID-19 have emerged, there is evidence that these variants can transmit more easily between people. In order to combat this, doubling up on mask layers may increase your protection from COVID-19 transmission, especially within more crowded indoor spaces. At this time, there are a couple of different options for how to increase your protection with masks.

- Double mask
 - Wear a surgical mask with a cloth mask over top as a second layer
- Filter in multi-layer mask
 - Wear cloth masks with three breathable fabric layers, and insert a filter for added protection, made from non-woven material, like vacuum bags

CDC Info on mask improvements: <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/70/wr/mm7007e1.htm>
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/effective-masks.html>

Gathering Limits

Gathering limits for event venues and in public settings is set at 100 people indoors and 150 people outdoors. Outdoor gatherings at private residences and in private backyards remain at a maximum of 25 people, with indoor house gatherings remaining at 10 people. This will remain the same until the update to the gathering limits on May 29th.

Travel Advisory Update

The Massachusetts Travel Order has been replaced with a Travel Advisory.

All visitors entering Massachusetts, including returning residents, are advised to quarantine for 10 days upon their arrival.

- Travelers are exempt from this advisory if they have a negative COVID-19 test result that has been administered up to 72 hours prior to their arrival in Massachusetts. If not before entry to Massachusetts, a test may be obtained after arrival, as long as travelers quarantine until a negative test result has been received.
- Anyone who is returning to Massachusetts after an absence of fewer than 24 hours is exempt from this advisory.

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- Workers who enter Massachusetts to perform critical infrastructure functions (as [specified by](#) the Federal Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency) are exempt from this advisory while they are commuting to or from or while at work.
- Travelers who are fully vaccinated (i.e. who have received two doses of either the Moderna or Pfizer COVID-19 vaccines OR who have received a single dose of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, 14 days or more ago) and who do not have symptoms are exempt from this advisory.

Travelers are encouraged to consult and follow the CDC's guidelines and requirements for travel: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/travel-during-covid19.html>

Understanding Quarantine and Isolation

It is important to make sure everyone understands and can prepare for the possibility of you or a loved one needing to quarantine or isolate.

Quarantine is for individuals who have been exposed to COVID-19, but are not sick and have not tested positive. Quarantine is typically 14 days long. While the CDC and DPH have released guidance for shortened quarantine under certain circumstances, the town of Belmont continues to recommend that individuals who have been exposed to COVID-19 complete the full 14 day quarantine to help stop the spread and practice maximum prevention.

Isolation is for individuals who are sick or who have tested positive for COVID-19. Isolation is typically 10 days long, but may be longer if you develop severe or lingering symptoms.

In both quarantine and isolation, you must remain in your home, and remain separate from anyone you share a household with. Preferably, not utilizing any common areas, like living rooms and kitchens, and using separate bathrooms wherever possible.

More information on isolation and quarantine can be found here: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/tips-to-make-covid-19-isolation-and-quarantine-easier>

Quarantine Updates: Post-Vaccination Guidance

Massachusetts has adopted the CDC changes to the quarantine guidance for individuals who have been fully vaccinated. Fully vaccinated is defined as follows: Individuals having received either two doses of Pfizer/Moderna, or the single dose Johnson and Johnson vaccine, who are at least 14 days out from their final dose. For those individuals, both the exposure quarantine guidance and the travel guidance have been updated. If a fully vaccinated individual is exposed to COVID-19/considered a close contact, they are not required to quarantine, as long as they meet the fully vaccinated criteria and are not experiencing any symptoms. In regards to travelling, those who are fully vaccinated are not required to quarantine or get tested upon their entry/re-entry into Massachusetts, as long as they meet the fully vaccinated criteria and do not experience any symptoms. If a fully vaccinated person does experience symptoms, they should still seek a test and isolate while waiting for their results. This guidance has not changed. This information can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

COVID-19 Testing – Updates and Tips

Project Beacon Sites

Project Beacon runs appointment-based testing sites throughout the Commonwealth. They specialize in high-volume testing scheduled through an online platform. Each Project Beacon site can test at least 1,000 individuals per day. Some sites are drive through, so be sure to read the instructions for whichever



site you choose. More information on new Massachusetts testing expansion [Here](#). Sign up for testing through Project Beacon [Here](#).

Should I be tested?

You should get a test for COVID-19 if:

- You develop *any* symptoms of COVID-19, even if they are mild, or
- You are a close contact of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, or
- You have traveled to a non-low risk state and are returning to MA, or
- You are planning to travel to a state that requires testing prior to arrival

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

If you develop symptoms of COVID-19, even if they are mild, please contact your healthcare provider and a test site near you to schedule a test. You can also [check your symptoms online](#).

Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus and may include:

- Fever, chills or shaking chills
- Signs of a lower respiratory illness (e.g., cough, shortness of breath, lowered oxygen saturation)
- Fatigue, sore throat, headache, body aches/myalgia, or new loss of sense of taste or smell
- Other less common symptoms can include gastrointestinal symptoms (e.g. nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea), rash, and inflammatory conditions such as “COVID toes”.
- In elderly, chronically ill, or debilitated individuals such as residents of a long-term care facility, symptoms of COVID-19 may be subtle such as alterations in mental status or in blood glucose control

Where can I get a test?

Please visit this page to enter your zip code and find a testing site near you: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/find-a-covid-19-test>

You can also download a full list of sites: [MA COVID-19 Testing Sites PDF](#) | [DOC](#)

Information continues to evolve quickly, so we encourage all those looking to be tested to contact the site prior to arrival. Many sites may also require pre-screening, a referral and/or an appointment.

Is there a cost?

COVID-19 testing for symptomatic individuals and close contacts is usually covered by insurance and available at no cost to you. Contact your insurance with questions about if particular testing sites are within your network. Additionally, many test sites in the Commonwealth test uninsured individuals for free. If you are uninsured, please call your local test site to confirm before making an appointment.

Belmont Food Pantry: May and June Hours

The Belmont Food Pantry will be open to distribute food from 8:30 – 10:00 a.m. on the dates listed. The distribution will still be a drive-thru with everyone remaining in their car, pulling up to the volunteer to check in and another volunteer will put the bag(s), per family, into the car. Walkers PLEASE keep a distance from each other and Food Pantry volunteers WILL COME to you. Belmont residents who are coming to receive food, please remember to bring your ID and have it ready before you get to the check in. Click here for the application and instructions:

<https://sites.google.com/.../thebelmont.../home/new-client-forms>

Belmont Helps: Ways to Help Our Community

[Donate](#) | [Volunteer](#) | [Ask for Help](#) | [Find Resources](#) | [Request or Help Sew Masks](#)

Belmont Helps, a Winn Brook Parent Teacher Association Committee, is a 100% volunteer organization founded on March 14, 2020 to connect Belmont area community members in need during the COVID-19 outbreak to resources and volunteers. More information can be found at www.belmonthelps.org. Contact belmonthelps@gmail.com or leave a message at (617) 993-0162 for a call back from a team member.

COVID-19 Informational Call Center and Email

For general COVID-19 questions, all Massachusetts residents encouraged to call the state's 2-1-1 hotline that is staffed by operators 24/7 and with translators available in multiple languages. Residents with questions can dial 2-1-1 from any landline or cellphone or use the live chat option on the [Mass 2-1-1 website](#).

Please call 9-1-1 in the event of an emergency. Calls should not be made to 9-1-1 to obtain information about COVID-19.



BELMONT FOOD PANTRY HOURS

The Food Pantry will be **OPEN** on a limited bases for May & June from **8:30-9:30 am** for Belmont residents to receive food or to drop off donations. The pantry will **NOT** be open on any other days.

Saturday May 1st
Saturday May 15th
Saturday June 5th

Donations are only accepted on the above dates –
DO NOT LEAVE FOOD DONATIONS AT THE TOWN HALL DOOR!!

The Belmont Food Pantry will **NOT OPEN** during state snow emergencies; when Belmont Schools are closed, and when there is a heavy storm the Friday night before Saturday opening.

GO TO OUR WEBSITE/FACEBOOK PAGE FOR CONTINUED UPDATES
<https://sites.google.com/site/thebelmontfoodpantry/>
<https://www.facebook.com/BFPantry/>

