



**TOWN OF WESTPORT**  
WESTPORT, MASSACHUSETTS 02790

OFFICE OF BOARD OF HEALTH  
856 MAIN ROAD

Tel: (508) 636-1015  
Fax: (508) 636-1016  
Health@Westport-MA.gov  
westport-ma.com

**Matthew J. Armendo**  
Director

**Westport Board of Health**  
**COVID-19 Update**  
**February 19, 2021**

**Case Status:**

Total number of confirmed COVID-19 positive cases of Westport residents on the state's weekly city & town report of February 18, 2021 was **1316 - up 35 cases in a week**. Westport remains in the **RED** zone of higher risk, but the data show a sustained downward trend. The Town remains above the statewide average on case and positivity metrics. The rolling 14-day incidence rate of cases has decreased to **42.2/100,000 (vs. 30.0 statewide)**. Please visit the state's [interactive data dashboard](#) for more details.

**Testing Data:**

21,840 COVID tests have been performed on Westport residents to date, based on the state's February 18th weekly report. There were **117** positive tests out of 1734 done in the last 14 days for a positivity rate of **6.76%**. The statewide positivity rate declined to 2.70%.

**Vaccine Update:**

- **NEW Eligibility:** Effective February 18<sup>th</sup>, individuals ages 65 and over and those with 2+ certain medical conditions, including asthma (moderate to severe), are eligible to get vaccinated. Residents and staff of low income and affordable public and private senior housing are also eligible. However, due to extremely high demand for appointments and limited vaccine supply, it could take more than a month to actually get an appointment at: [vaxfinder.mass.gov/](https://vaxfinder.mass.gov/)
- **Effective the week of March 1st, the state will no longer provide first dose vaccines for individual municipal clinics.** We are disappointed with this decision, but are hopeful that, with the support of Rep. Schmid, the Westport Board of Health will receive at least one more allocation of first dose vaccine to continue to serve homebound residents. If you know of a Westport resident who is homebound and still needs to be vaccinated, please provide contact information to the COA at 508-636-1026 in case we are able to get additional supply.
- The BOH held its first (and likely last) vaccination clinic on February 11th in partnership with the Council on Aging and the Fire Department. We do expect to receive 200 second doses in the second week of March to ensure that everyone who received their first dose through the BOH will be fully vaccinated.
- **Dartmouth High School Clinics:** As previously reported, Westport partnered with Dartmouth to offer large public vaccine clinics for eligible residents. The first two clinics were held on Saturday, Feb 6<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> and almost 2000 people received the first dose of Pfizer vaccine. Second dose clinics will be offered 3 weeks after the first ones. It is unlikely that this program will continue given the state's decision to prioritize mass vaccination sites and pharmacies for vaccine allocation.
- **Southcoast Mass Vaccination Site:** A new mass vaccination site will open on Wednesday, February 24, at the former Circuit City site in Dartmouth, operated by Curative. All appointments through March 10<sup>th</sup> are booked at this time. Check back at [vaxfinder.mass.gov](https://vaxfinder.mass.gov/)

- **Telephone support for persons without internet access** who wish to make vaccine appointments at public clinics is now available by **calling 211**.
- Local pharmacies and mass vaccination sites are also providing vaccine to eligible residents. The closest sites are CVS and Walgreens in Fall River. Bristol Community College is another site. For all of the above clinics, go to: [vaxfinder.mass.gov](https://vaxfinder.mass.gov)

## **Other COVID-19 News**

**Variants in Massachusetts:** Both the UK and South African variants of COVID-19 have now been found in Massachusetts. Though not yet common, they are presumed to be spreading in the community. Since they are more contagious versions of the virus, we urge residents to keep up diligently with safety precautions.

**Updated mask guidance:** The CDC has updated its guidance around mask wearing, by emphasizing the importance of a tight fit and improved filtration. One way to achieve that is to 'double mask' by wearing a cloth mask over a surgical mask. [CDC Mask guidance](https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2022/s0601-covid-mask-guidance.html).

### **MassHealth Expands Vaccine-Related Transportation for its Members:**

MassHealth is providing free transportation to vaccine appointments to anyone that has any type of MassHealth coverage or the Health Safety Net. This includes people with MassHealth Limited, Children's Medical Security Program (CMSP) and MassHealth Family Assistance (FA). In addition, members can request transportation services directly through MassHealth's Customer Service, rather than needing to request services through a health care provider.

If you have MassHealth or the Health Safety Net, you (or a caregiver) can call your health plan or MassHealth directly to schedule free transportation at 800-841-2900 (TTY: 800-497-4648).

**Massachusetts Business Capacity Limits:** Remain at 40% for many businesses.

**NO CHANGE in Gatherings Limit:** 10 indoors and 25 outdoors.

### **The Commonwealth still in Phase 3 Step 1 of Reopening (Order No. 58**

\* Indoor performance venues & indoor recreation businesses remain closed.

**Travel Order Guidance:** Vaccinated individuals must continue to comply with the Governor's Travel Order and related testing and quarantine requirements. However, those who are COVID-19-recovered, (i.e., tested positive more than 10 days but less than 90 days ago without current symptoms) do not need to quarantine or obtain a negative PCR when traveling back to Massachusetts. <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-travel-order>

**COVID Testing:** Testing for COVID-19 is widely available in Massachusetts. You should get tested if you have any symptoms or have been a close contact of someone who tested positive. Find a test site [here](#). Free testing is also available in Fall River and New Bedford through the [Stop the Spread](#) initiative.

### **Town COVID Updates:**

- **Town Hall and Annex** – Open to the public BY APPOINTMENT ONLY. Service by phone, mail, outdoor drop box, or online is recommended. Face masks are required for in-person appointments.
- **The Westport Food Pantry is at the Westport Grange, 931 Main Rd.** Next food pantry pick-up will be on Monday from 9 am to noon. Monetary donations can be sent to the Friends of the Westport Council on Aging (FWCOA) Attn. Food Pantry, PO Box 4228, Westport, MA 02790. Food and grocery gift card donations are accepted on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday mornings.
- **Pet Food Pantry** – Donations of dry or canned dog or cat food, (maximum weight 25#), as well as treats, toys, cat litter and puppy training pads are accepted. Please drop off your pet supply donation at the Grange, during its regular donation times.
- **Schools** - The Westport Community Schools now reports weekly updates on COVID cases at <https://westportschools.org/covid-19/>.

### **How to Help Out**

#### **The Need for Blood Donations Continues, and Recovered COVID-19 Donors Can Help Save Lives**

In coordination with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the Red Cross is seeking people who are fully recovered from the new coronavirus to sign up to donate plasma to help current COVID-19 patients. People who have fully recovered from COVID-19 have antibodies in their plasma that can attack the virus. This convalescent plasma is being evaluated as treatment for patients with serious or immediately life-threatening COVID-19 infections, or those judged by a healthcare provider to be at high risk of progression to severe or life-threatening condition. Interested individuals can visit [RedCrossBlood.org/plasma4covid](http://RedCrossBlood.org/plasma4covid) to learn more. The Red Cross follows the highest standards of safety and infection control, and volunteer donors are the only source of blood for those in need. To make an appointment to donate, please visit [www.RedCrossBlood.org](http://www.RedCrossBlood.org).

#### **In closing:**

Stay safe everyone. The light at the end of the tunnel is growing brighter every day thanks not only to the rising number of vaccinations, but also to the hard work of so many people across Westport. But we still must remain vigilant by wearing masks, social distancing and washing hands - even if you have received one or two doses of the vaccine. Thank you for your continued cooperation and stay safe everyone! continued cooperation.

*Matthew J. Armendo, Director*