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Westport Board of Health COVID-19 Update

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Case Update:

Total number of state confirmed COVID-19 positive cases of Westport residents as of August 12th is **107**. However, our Town nurse reported **111** verified cases on her roster, not including visitors or seasonal residents. (Case counts have been adjusted due to change in diagnosis in some cases.) On the good news front, no new deaths to report and no residents are currently in the hospital. The [state's weekly reporting of town specific data](#) is issued every Wednesday afternoon and now contains additional detail.

Statewide there have been **113,198 confirmed** cases and **8,547 confirmed** deaths as of August 12th.

PLEASE do not let your guard down now! COVID-19 is not going away. Vigilance with social distancing, wearing face coverings, the frequent use of disinfectant and handwashing are vital, especially if we want to improve our chances of a successful new school year.

Testing Data:

3135 COVID tests have been performed on Westport residents up through August 12th. There were 7 positive tests out of 537 done in the last 14 days, for a rate of 1.30%. Currently, the statewide 14-day average has stayed the same at 1.75% positive rate. Ideally we want to be under 1% statewide to break the chain of transmission.

The state's **Stop the Spread** free testing initiative for higher risk communities has been extended through September 12th and includes sites in Fall River and New Bedford. The sites in these communities are open to all. Some sites require appointments, others offer walk-up or drive-thru service. Hours of operation, site details, and contact information can be found online. To find a site or learn more, visit www.mass.gov/stophthespread.

Other COVID-related news:

Quick links to key COVID information can be found on the town's main COVID-19 webpage at: <https://www.westport-ma.com/covid-19-corona-virus-information>

Updated gatherings order - effective Tuesday, August 11:

- Reduces the limit on outdoor gatherings from 100 to 50 people (indoor gatherings limit will remain at 25 people)
- Apply these limits to all types of gatherings, on both public and private property
- Require face coverings where more than 10 people from different households will be mixing.

Restaurant rules have been updated

- Alcoholic beverages may only be served for on-site consumption if accompanied by orders for food prepared on-site.
- The administration will be taking measures to ensure that bars masquerading as restaurants will be closed.

Increased Enforcement

- Public safety officials, including state and local law enforcement, have been authorized to enforce these orders.
- Event hosts in violation of these orders will be subject to fines or cease and desist orders.

Phase 3, Step 1 of re-opening will continue indefinitely.

Cross-Agency COVID Enforcement and Intervention Team:

- The Administration also announced a targeted cross-agency COVID Enforcement and Intervention Team that will be responsible for ramping up enforcement statewide and coordinating local intervention efforts at the local level in higher risk COVID-19 communities.
- Westport is not a higher risk community at this time.

UPDATED Travel Order – Rhode Island now considered a higher risk state and its residents are no longer exempt. All visitors entering Massachusetts, including returning residents, are required to:

1. Complete the online Massachusetts Travel Form prior to arrival, unless they are visiting from a lower-risk state designated by the Department of Public Health (currently CT, VT, NH, ME, NY, NJ and Hawaii).
2. Quarantine for 14 days or produce a negative COVID-19 test result that has been administered up to 72-hours prior to arrival in Massachusetts.

There are some exemptions for transitory travel through Massachusetts, commuting for work or school, for medical treatment and military personnel, shopping, banking, other short personal errands.

I encourage basic common sense – the goal is to minimize risk of spread and increased exposure to our residents. Westporters should minimize any unnecessary activity in RI or other hotspot states.

Town Updates:

- **Beaches** - Signage at Cheery & Web beach reminds visitors that masks along the path to the beach are required. Beachgoers should also wear a mask unless able to maintain social distancing of at least 6 feet or more at all times and should maintain at least 12 feet minimum distance between towel/beach blanket areas.
- **Town Hall and Annex** – Open to the public, however service by phone, mail, outdoor dropbox, or online is still highly recommended. Face masks are required for in person visits.
- **Town nurse's** regular schedule is now Monday, Tuesday and Thursday 8 am to 4 pm., as well as Wed & Friday 8 to noon.

- **The temporary Food Pantry is at the Town Hall Annex Gym, 856 Main Road.** The next food pantry pick-up is scheduled for Monday, August 17th. Donations of non-perishable food, paper goods and toiletries are still needed. Food donations days are Tuesday and Thursday mornings. [WESTPORT FOOD PANTRY](#)

Other BOH announcements:

- **Mosquito and tick season** – I want to remind everyone to protect against mosquito and tick bites. EEE and WNV have been found in the area and tick borne Lyme disease is on the upswing. Aerial mosquito spraying to control EEE has begun for parts of Bristol County, though Westport was not included in this round of spraying. Visit the [Massachusetts Aerial Mosquito Spray Map webpage](#) for the latest updates on spraying and the [EEE in Massachusetts web page](#) for tips on prevention.
- **Our first Red Cross Blood Drive** at the Annex was a big success. The next one will be in November. Details to follow.
- **Water advisory** - <https://www.westport-ma.com/home/news/water-advisory>

Stay safe everyone. Thank you for your continued cooperation.

Matthew J. Armendo, Director
Westport Health Department