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Westport Board of Health COVID-19 Update
October 30, 2020

Case Update:

Total number of state confirmed COVID-19 positive cases of Westport residents as of October 29th is **192, up 28 from last week. The state data are pulled every Wednesday morning. However, the nurse's count as of 4 pm Thursday was up another 17 cases to 209. These numbers are a significant concern, especially as we go into the colder months and flu season. That also means Westport is staying in the "red" or higher risk category for the second week.** It seems highly probable the town will stay in the red category for 3 consecutive weeks, we will have to go back to Step 1 of Phase 3. The state risk map is updated based on the [state's weekly community COVID report](#).

The rolling 14 day incidence rate has jumped from 9.0 to 14.2/100,000. There have been 158 recoveries, and no new hospitalizations or deaths to report.

NOTE: The DPH weekly report has been moved to Thursday evenings, so the BOH update is now being published on Fridays.

Statewide there have been **151,741 confirmed cases** and **9,727 confirmed deaths** as of October 29th.

DPH has started reporting on clusters based on location and the biggest category is household spread. That seems to be the situation in Westport too. We have also had several cases in the schools. Again, I urge Westport residents to cooperate with our town nurse and the state contact tracing staff if you should get a call – it will help the entire community.

I know I sound like a broken record, but please don't let your guard down now. We really need everyone to keep up with maintaining social distancing, wearing (and washing re-usable) face coverings, and washing or sanitizing hands frequently. And get your flu shot!

Testing Data:

7704 COVID tests have been performed on Westport residents up through October 29th. There were **38 positive tests** out of 1060 done in the last 14 days for a rate of **3.58%**, significantly higher than the Bristol county wide rate of 2.9%. The statewide 14-day average is trending up again to 1.55% positive.

Extended through January 15th: The state's **Stop the Spread** free testing initiative in certain communities has been extended. The sites in these communities are open to all. To find a site visit www.mass.gov/stophespread.

Other COVID-related news:

Updated standards: The following sectors have updated standards as of 10/29/20: museums, close contact services, retail, arcades & other recreation, worship, and performance venues. Most of the changes are clarifications and added explanations. For details: <https://www.mass.gov/resource/reopening-sector-specific-protocols-and-best-practices>

COVID-19 Eviction Diversion: The state has launched a new website with information on resources available to help residents impacted by COVID-19 to cover rent and mortgage payments at <http://www.mass.gov/CovidHousingHelp>. Residents can also call 2-1-1, which features a language line and trained staff.

ABCC Advisory: The Alcoholic Beverages Control Commission issued an advisory on October 13, 2020 reminding hotels, restaurants and other licensees that their **indoor events/gatherings are limited to 25 people in a single enclosed space.**

Statewide gatherings order is modified, effective October 5:

- The limit for indoor gatherings remains at a maximum of 25 people.
- Outdoor gatherings in private backyards will remain at a maximum of 50 people.
- Outdoor gatherings at event venues and in public settings will have a limit of 100
 - Also requires 1 week advance notice to the Board of Health if attendance is expected to exceed 50.

Travel Order: The list of higher and lower risk states changes often so make sure to check the status before any travel. The state has updated the criteria for risk level and as of 10/17 the following states are considered low risk: **CA, WA, HI, DC, NY, NJ and the New England states, except RI.** Rhode Island remains on the restricted list. Detailed travel order instructions and the travel risk map can be found [here](#). In summary, all visitors entering Massachusetts, including returning residents, must:

1. Complete the online Massachusetts Travel Form prior to arrival, unless they are visiting from a lower-risk state.
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.

COVID-19 Community Impact Survey (CCIS) is an online survey to collect data on the social, economic, and health needs and inequities resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. Open to anyone over age 14: <http://www.mass.gov/COVIDsurvey>.

Town COVID Updates:

- **Halloween Guidance:** The BOH is strongly encouraging residents to avoid indoor Halloween activities and parties. Trick or treating has not been prohibited but families should use their judgment, given the spike in COVID cases locally. The BOH has posted Halloween guidance on its website and reminds residents that gathering limits and all other COVID-19 rules apply: https://www.westport-ma.com/sites/g/files/vyhlf1441f/uploads/halloween_tips.pdf

- **The Westport Food Pantry is at the Westport Grange, 931 Main Rd and is now partnering with the nonprofit Friends of the Westport Council on Aging (FWCOA).** The next food pantry pick-up is scheduled for Monday, November 2nd from 9 am to noon at the Grange. Donation guidelines have been updated with monetary donations now going to the FWCOA, Attn. Food Pantry, PO Box 4228, Westport, MA 02790. Food and grocery gift card donations are accepted on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday mornings at the Grange.
- **Emergency Absentee Ballot:** If you have been admitted to a healthcare facility or you are instructed to quarantine in your home within 1 week of the election, you may use the [absentee ballot application](#) to designate someone of your choice to deliver a ballot to you. The person you designate to deliver your ballot will need to bring the signed application to the Town Clerk's Office, pick up your absentee ballot, bring it to you, and return it for you by the close of polls on Election Day.
- **Election Day:** COVID -19 safety protocols are in place at all polling locations. If
- **Schools -** The Westport Community Schools [website](#) has the latest on what is happening locally. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) has begun issuing weekly updates on positive COVID-19 cases in schools every Thursday: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/positive-cases/#weekly-report> You can also find FAQs for families with information from the state at: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/backtoschool/>
- **Town Hall and Annex** – Open to the public, but service by phone, mail, outdoor dropbox, or online is recommended. Face masks are required for in person visits.

Other BOH announcements:

- **Flu season:** Flu vaccines are available from the Town Nurse by appointment only. We no longer have any high dose (for over 65) vaccine in our supply. Please call 508-636-1030 if you would like to make an appointment. Thursday evening appointments are also available.
- **Sharps Kiosk:** The sharps kiosk for safe disposal of used medical sharps/needles is outside the nurse's office. Instructions on proper packaging for safety are posted there or you may purchase sharps disposal containers from the nurse. DO NOT place sharps in the outside drop box.
- **Blood Drive:** The next BOH sponsored blood drive on November 6th is completely filled up. Thanks to all who signed up to donate blood. We appreciate the community support.

Stay safe everyone. Thank you for your continued cooperation.

Matthew J. Armendo, Director