

Good Morning All.

SUMMARY:

1. New Cases: DPH new cases reported yesterday:

Barnstable County: 120 new cases.

Martha's Vineyard: 10 new cases.

Nantucket: 2 new cases.

2. Hospitalizations and Fatalities: 3-day avg.hospitalizations have fallen to the upper 40's/low 50's, yet relatively high patient counts in the ICUs (16 patients) remain. Fatalities remain elevated but are in-line with rates seen during Wave 1 last spring.

3. Schools and Childcare Centers: Due to the mildness of the flu season the DPH has **removed the requirement** that all school children receive a flu vaccination on or before 2/28/21. **Many school districts returned to a hybrid learning model last week.**

4. Testing

5. Weekly Town Risk, and Statewide Cluster Analyses

6. Vaccination:

-Vaccination in **long term care facilities** began on 12/28.

-Vaccination of **Police/Fire/EMS** began on Jan 11.

-Vaccination of **Shelter/Congregate Living residents and staff** began on Jan 18.

-All remaining groups in Phase 1 are now eligible to be vaccinated (including **home health workers, non-COVID facing health workers**).

-The DPH has adjusted its list of persons prioritized for vaccination at the beginning of Phase 2. **Group 1 now only includes persons aged 75+.** **Group 2 now consists of persons aged 65+, or with 2+ co-morbidities, or residents and staff of low income and affordable senior housing.**

-Planning for 4-5 sub-regional mass vaccination sites on Cape Cod, to begin operation during Phase 2, is underway. **The DPH is in discussions with the County Health Dept. to open a DPH-operated mass vaccination site on Cape Cod during Phase 2 of the vaccination plan.**

-Phase 2 of the State Vaccination Plan will begin on February 1. Vaccination at local clinics during Phase 2 will be by appointment only and **appointments will be able to be scheduled once County and local health authorities can be sure of vaccine availability from the DPH.** The public will be given ample notice of planned vaccination clinics for eligible persons in Phase 2. As noted, Phase 2 Group 1 only includes persons age 75+.

7. COVID Mutation and Changes in Transmissibility/Virulence/Other: **There are three variants of concern: B117 (UK), B1351 (S. Africa), and P1 (Brazil).** All three appear to be equally virulent but at least 50% more transmissible. Within two months of the B117 variant being identified in the UK (October) it became the dominant strain circulating there. **The CDC is now posting surveillance information on the emergence of the B117 variant in the US: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/transmission/variant-cases.html>.** **Existing vaccines may be less effective against these new strains.** The degree to which this may be so is being investigated. **Moderna and Pfizer are working on a booster shot to counter these new strains.**

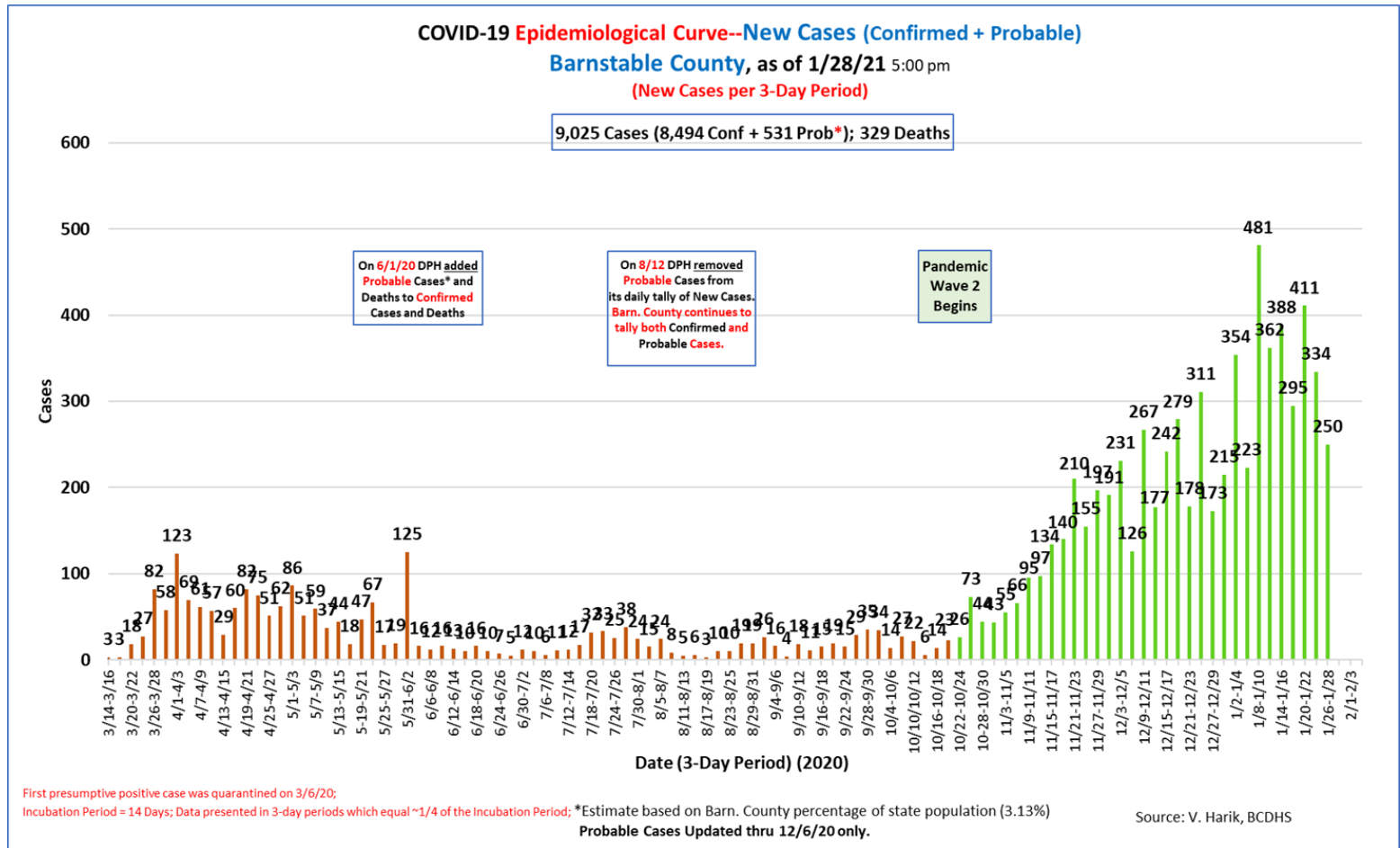
DETAIL:

1. New Cases

Daily new case numbers in Barnstable County remain high but in a downward trend following the post-Christmas/New Year's surge. **120 cases** were reported yesterday.

Nantucket's 7-day average cases per 100,000 population continues to trend lower. **2 cases** were reported yesterday.

Martha's Vineyard's 7-day average cases per 100,000 population also continues to trend lower. **10** cases were reported yesterday.



Trailing 14-Day Testing and Cases by County:

PENDING NEW WEEKLY DATA

2. Hospitalizations and Fatalities

Hospitalizations and acuity of illness have increased very significantly since the second week of November and remain elevated. Cape Cod Hospital and Falmouth Hospital have **suspended visitation** of inpatients except under very limited circumstances (end-of-life, etc.) and have **stopped non-essential surgeries and other elective procedures**.

DPH reporting of hospitalizations now has a 2-day lag; Tina Shaw of CCHC is providing me with more recent information (thank you Tina). Yesterday evening CCHC reported that there were **42 COVID patients in hospital**, 16 of which were in the **ICU**.

Fatalities: 2 additional fatalities were reported yesterday. The total is now **329**.

Barnstable County COVID-Related Hospital & ICU Beds Occupied, with Cases & Deaths

Source: V. Harik, Barn. County Dept of Human Services; Tabulation of MA DPH Data

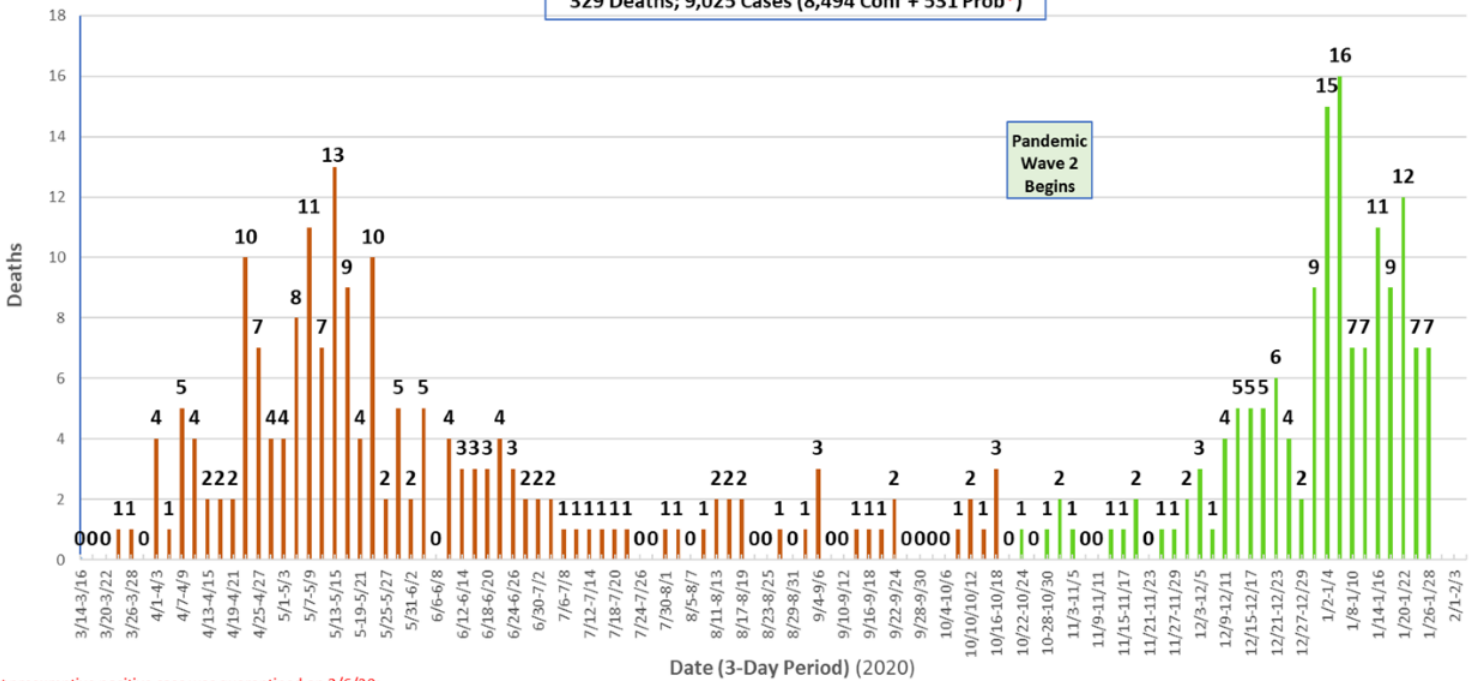
WEEKLY: (On Tuesdays)		Not Cumulative		Cumulative		3-Day Avg. of Persons in Hosp. (Med/Surg + ICU)	ICU Percent of Beds Occupied
Date Reported by DPH	Hospital	Hospital Beds Occupied	ICU Beds Occupied	Barnstable County Cases (Confirmed)	Barnstable County Deaths		
4/22/2020	Cape Cod Hospital	11	5				
	Falmouth Hospital	13	7				
(Wave 1 Peak)		24	12	678	27	41.0	33%
4/28/2020	Cape Cod Hospital	18	5				
	Falmouth Hospital	11	14				
		29	19	820	39	27.7	40%
(Wave 1 Peak)							
12/22/2020	Cape Cod Hospital	22	2				
	Falmouth Hospital	8	1				
		30	3	4,644	221	36.0	9%
12/29/2020	Cape Cod Hospital	41	5				
	Falmouth Hospital	11	2				
		52	7	5,181	229	58.3	12%
1/5/2021	Cape Cod Hospital	23	7				
	Falmouth Hospital	19	3				
		42	10	5,818	256	51.0	19%
1/12/2021	Cape Cod Hospital	26	14				
	Falmouth Hospital	9	4				
		35	18	6,685	277	49.0	34%
1/19/2021	Cape Cod Hospital	28	13				
	Falmouth Hospital	10	5				
		38	18	7,499	303	61.0	32%
1/26/2021	Cape Cod Hospital	22	13				
	Falmouth Hospital	10	5				
		32	18	8,303	323	46.7	36%
Hospitalizations, Last Report:							
		Not Cumulative		Cumulative		3-Day Avg. of Persons in Hosp. (Med/Surg + ICU)	ICU Percent of Beds Occupied
		Hospital Beds Occupied (Last Report)	ICU Beds Occupied (Last Report)	Barnstable County Cases (Confirmed)	Barnstable County Deaths		
1/28/2021	Cape Cod Hospital	15	11				
	Falmouth Hospital	9	5				
		24	16	8,494	329	45.7	40%

COVID-19 Epidemiological Curve--New Deaths (Confirmed + Probable)

Barnstable County, as of 1/28/21 5:00 pm

(New Deaths per 3-Day Period)

329 Deaths; 9,025 Cases (8,494 Conf + 531 Prob*)



First presumptive positive case was quarantined on 3/6/20;

Incubation Period = 14 Days; Data presented in 3-day periods which equal ~1/4 of the Incubation Period

* Probable Cases Updated thru 12/6/20 only.

Source: V. Harik, BCDHS; Using data provided by the MA Department of Public Health

Recent data on COVID fatalities in Barnstable County suggest that residents of **Long Term Care/Skilled Nursing Facilities/Rest Homes** represent over 50% of all fatalities (139 of 256 fatalities, as of 1/5/21). This is a lower percentage than that seen during phase 1 of the pandemic last spring (over 65%).

3. Schools and Childcare Centers

School districts are staying vigilant and reacting well to new cases. Most school districts on the Cape and Islands returned to a hybrid learning status last week following the Christmas and New Year's holiday break.

DESE and the DPH (memo of 1/8/21) announced that they are seeking to introduce COVID-19 screening testing using a pooled strategy in the school setting. Schools may elect to participate by responding to a survey that DESE/DPH have posted. Further information will be forthcoming.

~~For the 2020-2021 school year the DPH has mandated that all school children be vaccinated for seasonal influenza. This week the DPH extended the deadline for doing so from 12/31/20 to 2/28/21. This mandate has been canceled by the DPH.~~

During Phase 2 of the state vaccination rollout **childcare center** staff are to be vaccinated alongside school staff.

4. Testing

Additional testing locations in Barnstable County for both symptomatic and asymptomatic persons remain open in **Falmouth** at the Fairgrounds and in **Hyannis** at the Melody Tent. Daily testing capacity is 50 at the Falmouth site and 350 at the Hyannis site. Neither site is open daily and persons must call ahead for an appointment. Details: <https://www.capecodhealth.org/medical-services/infectious-disease/coronavirus/covid-19-testing-process/>.

In late December additional testing by **Outer Cape Community Health Services** began and continues at its 3 locations in **Wellfleet, Harwich Port, and Provincetown** (<https://outercape.org/2020/12/23/outer-cape-health-services-to-offer-covid-19-asymptomatic-testing-beginning-december-23/>). These sites may not open be daily and persons must call ahead for an appointment.

Eligibility criteria for the testing include residency in Barnstable County. Testing is done by appointment only. Tests cost \$75, \$110 for travel-related tests, and no one will be turned away if unable to pay for a test.

DPH-mandated **routine testing** in skilled nursing facilities/long term care settings (SNF/LTC) continues. This provides critical surveillance and allows these facilities to stay ahead of asymptomatic spread amongst staff and residents. Routine testing in SNF/LTC settings has increased to weekly for staff.

In addition, the State's **BinaxNOW rapid testing program** (already available to **schools**) has been extended to visitors of **nursing homes** and rest home residents (LTC settings) to allow visitation of residents while limiting the risk of infection from visitors. DPH has published guidance on this. The program has also been extended to **childcare centers and homeless shelters** and management of these facilities may apply to the EEC and DPH for testing kits.

5. Weekly Town Risk and Statewide Cluster Analyses

PENDING NEW WEEKLY DATA

6. Vaccination

All groups in Phase 1 are now eligible to be vaccinated and can be scheduled for vaccination.

On February 1 persons in Phase 2/Group 1 (age 75+) will be eligible to be vaccinated at locations which have the vaccine available. Appointments may be scheduled for this group starting 1/27, however appointments may not be immediately available due to overwhelming demand and still-limited supply of vaccine from the manufacturers.

Childcare staff will be eligible for vaccination alongside school staff in Phase 2.

The State has contracted with **CVS and Walgreens** to arrange vaccination of **older adults in SNFs/congregate care**. **CVS, Walgreens, and Stop & Shop pharmacies** will also schedule vaccinations for the groups in Phase 2, again depending upon vaccine supply.

- Vaccinations in **LTCs** began on 12/28 on Cape Cod.
- Vaccinations of **Police/Fire/EMS** will began on 1/11.
- Vaccination of staff and **residents** in **shelters**, other state-funded **congregate living settings**, and **correctional facilities** began on 1/18.

- Vaccination of **home healthcare providers, other non-COVID facing clinical providers, and all remaining providers in Phase 1** began this week.
- **Vaccination of Phase 2 Group 1 (Age 75+) will begin February 1.** The DPH has adjusted its list of persons prioritized for vaccination at the beginning of Phase 2, **adjusting Group 1 to only include persons aged 75+, and moving persons aged 65+ with 2+ co-morbidities and residents and staff of low income and affordable senior housing to Phase 2/Group 2.**

The Barnstable County Dept of Health and Environment has organized vaccination clinics for all Phase 1 groups in the Middle, Lower, and Outer Cape. The Sandwich Health Department, in partnership with other town Health Departments, is vaccinating all Phase 1 groups in the Upper Cape area. **Planning for regional mass vaccination sites, to begin operation during Phase 2, is underway.**

7. COVID Mutation and Changes in Transmissibility/Virulence/Other

The emergence of a variant of the COVID-19 virus in the UK, classified as B.1.1.7, was identified in October and publicized in early December. Reports hold that B117 is 50% - 70% more contagious than our predominant variant now circulating (D614G). Within two months of the variant being identified in the UK (October) it became dominant strain circulating there. B117 is spreading globally and has been detected in the US. **Additional variants of concern have emerged internationally: B1351 (South Africa) and Brazil (P1) which are also highly transmissible. Existing vaccine recipes may be less effective against these three new strains.**

Researchers are working to determine if B117 differs from D614G in terms of: **1.** How sick people become, **2.** If natural immunity is different following infection with D614G, and **3.** If immunity from vaccination differs since the vaccine was developed during the period that D614G has been predominant. **The existing vaccines may be less effective against the new strains. Moderna and Pfizer are working on a booster shot to counter these new strains.**

The CDC is now posting surveillance information on the emergence of the B117 variant in the US: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/transmission/variant-cases.html>.

According to an article by Andrew Joseph from StatNews, "Coronaviruses evolve more slowly than viruses like flu, but they do pick up mutations as they spread. **SARS-CoV-2 has been adding one or two changes a month to its RNA genome since it emerged late last year in China,** and different versions of the virus have been continuously circulating throughout the course of the pandemic. **But this variant (B.1.1.7 or VUI-202012/01) showed up with at least 17 mutations,** according to one genetic analysis." (Source: https://www.statnews.com/2020/12/21/looming-questions-new-variant-coronavirus/?utm_source=STAT+Newsletters&utm_campaign=1a74bda2ca-MR_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_8cab1d7961-1a74bda2ca-150158417).

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