

Town of Southwick Board of Health and Select Board COVID-19 Update for February 19, 2021

As of the most recent weekly public health report, there have been 460 positive cases of COVID-19 in the Town of Southwick. The Southwick Board of Health would like to stress that this is not a complete profile of the status of COVID-19 in the Town of Southwick. This number reflects those individuals who have received positive test results and *not* those awaiting results, untested symptomatic individuals, and those who might currently be asymptomatic. Additional information on case numbers can be found at mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-response-reporting.

! NEW INFORMATION - Earlier this week, the Baker-Polito Administration announced individuals ages 65 and over and those with 2+ certain medical conditions, including Asthma, can visit www.mass.gov/covidvaccine to start booking an appointment for vaccine beginning, February 18th. With this announcement, almost 1 million individuals are newly eligible for vaccine.

Due to extremely high demand for appointments and limited vaccine supply, it could take more than a month for all eligible individuals to secure an available appointment, unless federal supply significantly increases. Recently, Massachusetts has been receiving approximately 110,000 first doses per week from the federal government. Residents are encouraged to keep checking the State website, <https://vaxfinder.mass.gov/>, as appointments are added on a rolling basis. Additionally, seniors, ages 75 and up, can call **2-1-1** for assistance with locating and signing up for the vaccine.

Individuals 65 and over: Individuals 65 and over, including residents and staff of low income and affordable public and private senior housing are eligible to receive vaccine effective tomorrow, February 18th. Residents and staff of low income and affordable public and private senior housing can learn more about vaccination options www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-vaccinations-for-senior-housing-settings

Individuals with 2+ Certain Medical Conditions: Individuals 16 and older with two or more of certain medical conditions (defined below) are eligible for vaccine, effective tomorrow. In concert with CDC guidelines, the Commonwealth has adopted the list of conditions that cause individuals to be at an increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19. Learn more from www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-with-medical-conditions.html.

Phase 2 eligible conditions:

- Asthma (moderate-to-severe)
- Cancer
- Chronic kidney disease
- COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease)
- Down Syndrome
- Heart conditions, such as heart failure, coronary artery disease, or cardiomyopathies
- Immunocompromised state (weakened immune system) from solid organ transplant
- Obesity and severe obesity (body mass index [BMI] of 30 kg/m² or higher)
- Pregnancy
- Sickle cell disease

- Smoking
- Type 2 diabetes mellitus

! NEW INFORMATION – The Governor’s office also announced this week that, given the increase in scale and scope of the vaccine distribution plans, The State is streamlining its distribution channels and will only be providing vaccine to municipal clinics in disproportionately impacted communities. The Town of Southwick was not identified as one of these communities. At this time, the Southwick Vaccine Task Force is reviewing the information made available to them to determine how best to move forward in maximizing the vaccination rate in Town. The Vaccine Task Force recognizes that transportation to vaccine clinics can be an impediment to senior residents and encourages those in need of transportation to call the Southwick Council on Aging at (413) 569-5498.

All visitors and returning residents entering Massachusetts must follow the [travel orders](#). All travelers are instructed to complete the [Massachusetts Travel Form](#) prior to arrival and to self-quarantine for 10 days or produce a negative COVID-19 test result that has been administered up to 72-hours prior to your arrival in Massachusetts, except travelers from Hawaii. All persons are instructed not to travel to Massachusetts if they are displaying symptoms of COVID-19. Individuals who are COVID-19-recovered, meaning individuals who tested positive more than 10 days but less than 90 days ago and who do not have symptoms, do not need to obtain a negative PCR test prior to traveling to, or quarantine upon arrival to, Massachusetts.

The Town Hall north side lobby is open to the public for Town Clerk, Treasurer, Collector, and Assessors services. All other offices are available by phone, on-line, and by appointment. Due to the nature of our operations during the pandemic, please call these other offices before visiting Town Hall. All efforts have been made to ensure that customers and staff are kept safe. The Town of Southwick asks all visitors entering the building to abide by all posted signage.

Due to the continued rise in cases of COVID-19 in Massachusetts, residents are urged to continue to follow all public health precautions for reducing the spread of COVID-19: stay home unless absolutely necessary; if you must go out in public, practicing social distancing and proper hygiene etiquette; wear face coverings when inside retail stores and when social distancing cannot be maintained; and if you are experiencing signs of illness - fever, cough, shortness of breath – call your primary care provider for advice.

The Southwick Board of Health and Select Board continue to post case numbers and updated information regarding COVID-19 every week at [southwickma.org](#). For additional up-to-date information please visit [mass.gov/2019coronavirus](#) and [cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov](#). For non-emergency information and assistance, please call 2-1-1 or visit [mass211.org](#).