



Mayor Vieau - COVID-19 Situational Update

We are in this together!

The City of Chicopee has updates as the COVID-19 situation has warranted a centralized/increase in the distribution of information. These updates are intended to keep all informed of the actions being taken to reduce the impacts of Coronavirus on the community.

On Wednesday, December 29, 2021, the following City of Chicopee Departments have reported:

Mayor's Office

- The statewide numbers for infections continue to increase as Omnicron is taking hold
- US numbers are also increasing with the spread of the Omnicron variant
- We had one employee loose his battle with COVID this week
- The 30,000 tests in 15,000 kits have been distributed
- Our PCR test site was over worked with individuals looking for testing even with testing extended to three days the past two weeks
- The state had 9,228 new cases which is more than double than last week
- The state numbers indicated 63 new deaths yesterday which is an increase of 2 deaths from last week
- The state had 1,707 cases in hospitals which is an increase of 300 cases. Of those hospitalizations, there were 381 were in ICU which is 77 more than last week
- The state seven day average positivity remains well above 4% and is high at 11.08% which is more than double last week
- Testing is continuing with 70,320 molecular tests reported which brings the cumulative tests to 35,943,935 tests
- Vaccination opportunities are available to residents and we are at 68% vaccinated
- The group of 20-40 year olds remain the largest group being infected based upon new cases reported
- The group is working on extending the three day testing on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays through January
- The Fire Department will help with call outs to positive individuals
- We will need more data input and runners for the site to accommodate the increased demand and are looking for employees to volunteer
- We continue to suggest people not gather for New Year's Eve and have changed our inauguration plans to provide distancing
- The Massachusetts Department of Health adopted the CDC guidelines reducing quarantine to five days if you are positive and have no symptoms and then five days wearing a mask if in public
- If you are exposed you should wear a mask until you are tested for COVID

- In looking at the data, listening to Health Experts and looking at the data and the experience from the UK and South Africa we anticipate:
 - The CDC needs to change the required quarantine days to keep people working so we do not shut down our economy again and the Omnicron variant is different than Delta and other strains so the science makes sense to limit the number of days
 - Omnicron is extremely contagious and we will see a rapid increase in cases, more than the prior two winter waves
 - We must ensure we do not over extend our hospital resources, especially at the winter time when motor vehicle accidents and other illness are increasing
 - Vaccinations are necessary to decrease the severity of the COVID Omnicron infection
 - While Omnicron is less severe than Delta, it is still dangerous and vaccinations are important to preserve lives
 - Omnicron has overcome the Delta variant with over 86% of cases now due to the Omnicron variants
 - If we get through Valentine's Day then the infection rate should drop off based upon prior COVID waves and gatherings moving outdoors
 - It is suggested that if there are no additional variants that differ widely from Omnicron, we will reach herd immunity based upon the overwhelming Omnicron infection rate. The risk of impairment or death is still a major concern to reaching herd immunity

Health

- City Case Counts
 - There are 483 open cases which is up significantly
 - There are 31 deaths
 - 141 N/A
 - 6,963 recovered
 - A total of 7,618 cases to date
- We are averaging 40 to 50 cases a day
- We continue to encourage vaccines
- The Massachusetts Health Department has adopted the CDC guidelines and we encourage everyone to read them as they are specific based upon your situation
- The test site is doing an amazing job given the demands placed upon them
- The Health Department recommends extending the testing to three days based upon affordability by the city
- The self-test kits are out at the Health Department, Police Station, Library and Council on Aging. Only City Hall has a few test kits
- What the federal and state departments are implying is that we need to learn how to live with the COVID virus and protect ourselves. The CDC, vaccination availability, testing initiatives and prevalence of personal protection masks, hand sanitizer, and distancing is to have us learn to live our lives with the virus present

Police Department

- We have one new positive case and are able to provide services at all levels
- We are working the test site with traffic, administration and call outs
- Applications for new LTC permits have been cancelled so people are not entering the station
- We have no test kits available

Fire Department

- Status quo on services with six (6) firefighters testing positive and three (3) firefighters returned and one new firefighter out with COVID
- The Fire Department will have personnel to assist with testing at the Council on Aging site
- The Emergency Medical paid sick leave will continue until April 2022 but the individual will need a PCR test to document positive status
- The bottleneck at the test site is the data intake and processing the information to generate a label for the test. There is no room for additional data entry clerks and if we had more room we could process the line more efficiently

Emergency Management

- Status quo on staffing
- They will assist with testing through January on Monday, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays

Safety

- Status quo on staffing
- There were 269 tests administered on Monday and 85 tested positive for COVID
- For testing on Tuesday we had 237 tested and today as of 10:00 am we had 144 tested
- We will be well over 200 tested today
- Data input is a problem in processing tests quickly. The handwriting is often illegible and we do not have room currently to add more data clerks
- The data is a problem at night with visibility outdoors since the lighting is not designed for this activity
- We suggest moving to mornings only as individuals should be staying home and not working if they feel ill
- We suggest testing Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday from 8:00 to noon through January, depending upon affordability
- There would be no testing on the 17th due to the holiday

DPW

- Status quo on staffing and services with no new cases

COA

- Status Quo on staffing and services with one staff member out and one exposed to COVID
- They have distributed all our supply of self-tests
- They next vaccine clinic is on January 6th and we have slots open for appointments

Human Resources

- Status Quo on services
- The importance of discussing mask wearing with employees needs to be reinforced
- We are working on best practices for managers regarding employees and COVID

Library

- Full staffing and services with no COVID cases reported
- All test kits have been distributed

Treasurer

- Status Quo