



# **NEEDHAM PUBLIC HEALTH DIVISION**



## COVID Update

January 14, 2021 – The Town of Needham and Needham Public Health today provided the following update regarding COVID-19.

### **State DPH COVID-19 Numbers**

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health reports the number of positive cases and deaths daily on the state's COVID-19 [dashboard](#).

Town-specific case numbers are published by the state every Thursday.

- 1045 Needham cases to date (1/14/2021). This is an increase of 119 cases since the 1/7/21 report. Needham is in the YELLOW category this week. Read the state's Weekly Public Health Report [here](#).
- 102 Coronavirus deaths in Needham to date (1/14/21).

### **Cases on the Rise in Needham, Household Clusters Driving Cases**

According to Needham Public Health data, a sharp rise in cases over the last several weeks is largely attributable to household spread. In December, there were 62 clusters within households. A household "cluster" is defined as two or more confirmed Massachusetts cases, who reside at the same address with COVID-19 infection within 28 days of each other, and who are not associated with another cluster. It is important that people continue to wear masks and keep their distance in order to help stop the spread of the virus.

### **Needham Begins Vaccinating First Responders**

Needham Public Health vaccinated 200 police officers, firefighters and other first responders this week, as part of the state's Phase 1 vaccinations. The department will continue to offer the vaccine to first responders in the coming weeks, including offering second doses to those who have already received their first dose.

### **Important Vaccination Information**

Needham Public Health has been inundated with questions from residents about when they can receive the vaccine and will try to respond to all questions. In the meantime, please continue to check <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-vaccine-distribution-timeline-phase-overview> for when you can receive the vaccine. Needham Public Health is following the state of Massachusetts' 3-Phased Vaccine Distribution Plan. The Town does not have the ability to vaccinate individuals or groups outside of the state-approved list of recipients. Massachusetts is currently in Phase 1 of the vaccination effort. Eligible individuals in this group include: healthcare workers doing direct COVID-facing care; long-term care residents and staff and first responders (police, fire and EMT). Beginning January 18, 2021, those living or working in congregate care facilities (shelter, group homes, correctional facilities) will be eligible to receive the vaccine. Home-based health care workers and healthcare workers doing non-Covid-facing care are also in Phase 1. However, those groups are not yet eligible under the state rules.

Individuals 75-years-old and older are currently not eligible to receive the vaccine until Phase 2 (unless they fall into one of the Phase 1 groups). While some states are offering the vaccine to those 65-years-old or older, Massachusetts has not authorized that group as part of Phase 1 or Phase 2.

It is anticipated that Phase 2 will begin in February and Phase 3, which includes the general population, will begin in April.

Currently, Needham Public Health is ONLY able to offer the vaccine to first responders or to members of the Medical Reserve Corps, who are assisting with the vaccinations. Updated information will be posted on the Needham Covid website and emailed/texted to subscribers to Needham Covid Updates.