



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.  
Wellesley Health Department

## TOWN OF WELLESLEY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Annie F. Warren Building  
90 Washington Street  
Wellesley, MA 02481  
Tel: 781-235-0135

[www.wellesleyma.gov/health](http://www.wellesleyma.gov/health)

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

#### **State Announces New Indoor Mask Advisory for Some Fully Vaccinated Individuals Guidelines Also Include Recommendations for Schools**

**July 30, 2021 (Wellesley, MA)** - In light of the recent increase in the COVID-19 Delta variant and [updated guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control \(CDC\)](#), the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) has issued [new guidelines](#) advising some fully vaccinated individuals to wear a mask when indoors in public. The advisory specifically mentions people with weakened immune systems, those at increased risk for COVID-19, or those who may have household members including children who are at risk or unvaccinated. Public health officials are also advising everyone who is NOT vaccinated to mask up in indoor public settings and when it's not possible to stay distant from others.

Masks are still mandatory for **all individuals** on public and private transportation systems (including rideshares, livery, taxi, ferries, MBTA, Commuter Rail and transportation stations), in healthcare facilities and in other settings where there are vulnerable populations, such as congregate care settings.

Wellesley health officials support this new guidance and are closely monitoring the current COVID-19 situation. "Public health data and information is changing frequently and quickly, and we want to respond in a thoughtful manner. As additional information is released from MDPH, guidelines for our community may change. It's important that we all remain flexible and stay vigilant," said Health Department Director Lenny Izzo.

#### **Recommendations for Schools**

In addition to new guidelines for the public, MDPH and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) have jointly developed [guidance for the upcoming school year](#) that strongly recommends masks indoors for students in Grades K-6 as well as any students and staff who are not vaccinated. Today's guidance also includes recommendations on COVID-19 testing, and quarantine protocols.

Wellesley Public Schools officials are reviewing the new recommendations and working closely with the Health Department as they continue to plan for a full, in-person return to school for 2021-2022. "We want to be as responsive as possible to the evolution of the virus in our ongoing planning for the fall," said Superintendent of Schools Dr. David Lussier. Representatives from the School Department will be discussing this updated guidance at the Board of Health meeting on Wednesday, August 4<sup>th</sup> at noon.

#### **Cases and Vaccinations**

In July, Wellesley reported 31 new cases of COVID-19, including a few breakthrough cases in individuals who have been vaccinated. However, public health data does not specify whether these cases were caused by the Delta

variant. Our local case information continues to be updated weekly by the State and is available on the [COVID-19 Response Reporting interactive dashboard](#).

The [vaccination rate](#) in our community has increased to 65% (up from 64%) for individuals who have received both doses of either the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine or one dose of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine. **Town, Health and Schools officials continue to urge anyone in our community who has not been vaccinated to do so as soon as possible. The COVID-19 vaccine is free and appointments are widely available.**

A reminder that comprehensive COVID-19 information for Wellesley is regularly updated online on the [Wellesley Coronavirus Information Hub](#).

### **Farewell and Thank You to Cheryl Lefman!**

Community Health Coordinator Cheryl Lefman retired this week after 22 years with the Health Department. Cheryl's work on tobacco issues, pesticide reduction, flu clinics, mental health and well-being initiatives, and many other projects has been outstanding. During the COVID-19 pandemic, her dedication, many long days, care, and compassion for colleagues in the Health Department and everyone in Wellesley was truly invaluable. Enjoy your retirement Cheryl – we will miss you!

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