



January 8th, 2021

Important Dates:

January 18th: Martin Luther King Jr. Day

The Week in Numbers:

Cumulative Number of COVID-19 Cases* in Uxbridge Residents	466
Average Number of New Cases per Day (per 100,000 people)**	35.7

*confirmed by [PCR testing](#)

**Information from 1/7 [state data](#)

Helpful Links

- [Uxbridge Support Services](#)
- [Mass.gov/StopCOVID19](#)
- [CDC COVID-19 Info](#)
- [Report Workplace Violations](#)

About this Publication:

The COVID-19 Update is produced by the Uxbridge Board of Health with the help of volunteers from the [Academic Public Health Volunteer Corps](#). The Update provides residents relevant and timely updates about the COVID-19 situation, other public health topics and related news from the community. It is published every other Friday, and is accurate up to the time of publication.

COVID-19 Update

Status Update

All Aboard the Vaccine Train!

The rollout of the COVID-19 vaccine is underway in Massachusetts! Massachusetts is currently in Phase One of the state's plan, so healthcare workers treating COVID patients, first responders, and staff and patients of long-term and congregate care facilities are eligible to receive the vaccine. Phase two includes adults age 65 and older, essential workers (e.g. transit, food, and early education sectors), and those at high risk for severe COVID-19 infection. Vaccine distribution plans vary state by state, and across the US, vaccine rollout has been slower than originally planned. Two doses [spaced 3-4 weeks apart](#) are required for the vaccine to be effective. As of December 31st, [Massachusetts has administered](#) the first dose of the vaccine to 78,643 people. The original plan was to have the vaccine available to the general public by May but due to problems with distribution, it will likely be much later.

Plans are always being updated, so it is important to stay up to date on what phase you are in, when you can anticipate being able to receive the vaccine, and general vaccine guidelines. We recommend checking the Massachusetts government [vaccination page](#) for status updates and other information.

We would like to give a very warm welcome to our new Health Director, Erin Hightower. We also want to welcome our new Administrative Assistant, Sara Manganelli, and our intern, Shane Keville-Wagner. Each of them brings talent and commitment, and our Board of Health team is stronger than ever!

Metamorphosis of COVID-19

A new variant of the COVID-19 virus has been [detected in the United States](#) after having been identified in the UK as early as September. This new strain is called [B.1.1.7 and reportedly accounts for 60% of the new COVID-19 infections in London](#). A new strain of the COVID-19 virus is not surprising; in fact, the virus has already mutated from the strain that was originally detected in Wuhan in 2019. A mutation of the virus does not necessarily impact how the viral particles spread, how infectious the virus is or how severe an infection could be. Some early evidence suggests that this new strain [might have the potential to make COVID-19 more easily transmitted](#) (meaning one person infected with the new strain may spread the virus to more people), but it is still too early to confirm this.

While this may sound scary, the good news is that scientists are confident that the [current vaccines are effective](#) against this new strain. This new strain may spread faster in a community, but there is no evidence that it makes the virus more deadly or increases the severity of COVID-19 symptoms.

So, keep wearing your masks, keep practicing physical distancing, and continue to follow state guidelines so that we can keep our community safe.