

The Public Health Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic in Cambridge

COVID-19 WEEKLY REPORT

CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL

FEBRUARY 3, 2021



Cambridge
Public Health
Department

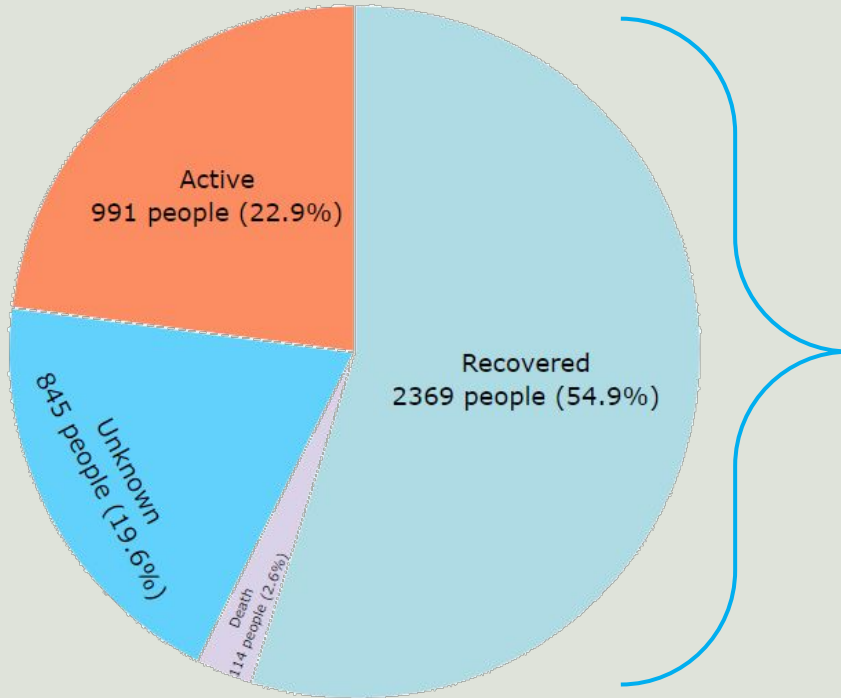


CHA Cambridge
Health Alliance



Case Snapshot (as of Jan. 31)

New Infections in Cambridge have declined since early January when rates reached their highest point in the pandemic. However, infection rates remain high and near peak levels.



4,319 Total Cases¹

(confirmed, probable and suspect)

- 4,017 in the community
- 302 cases in long-term cares

114 Deaths¹

- 66% of deaths were among LTC residents

Active Cases¹

- 23% of all cases are active

22.3 Confirmed Cases per 100,000¹

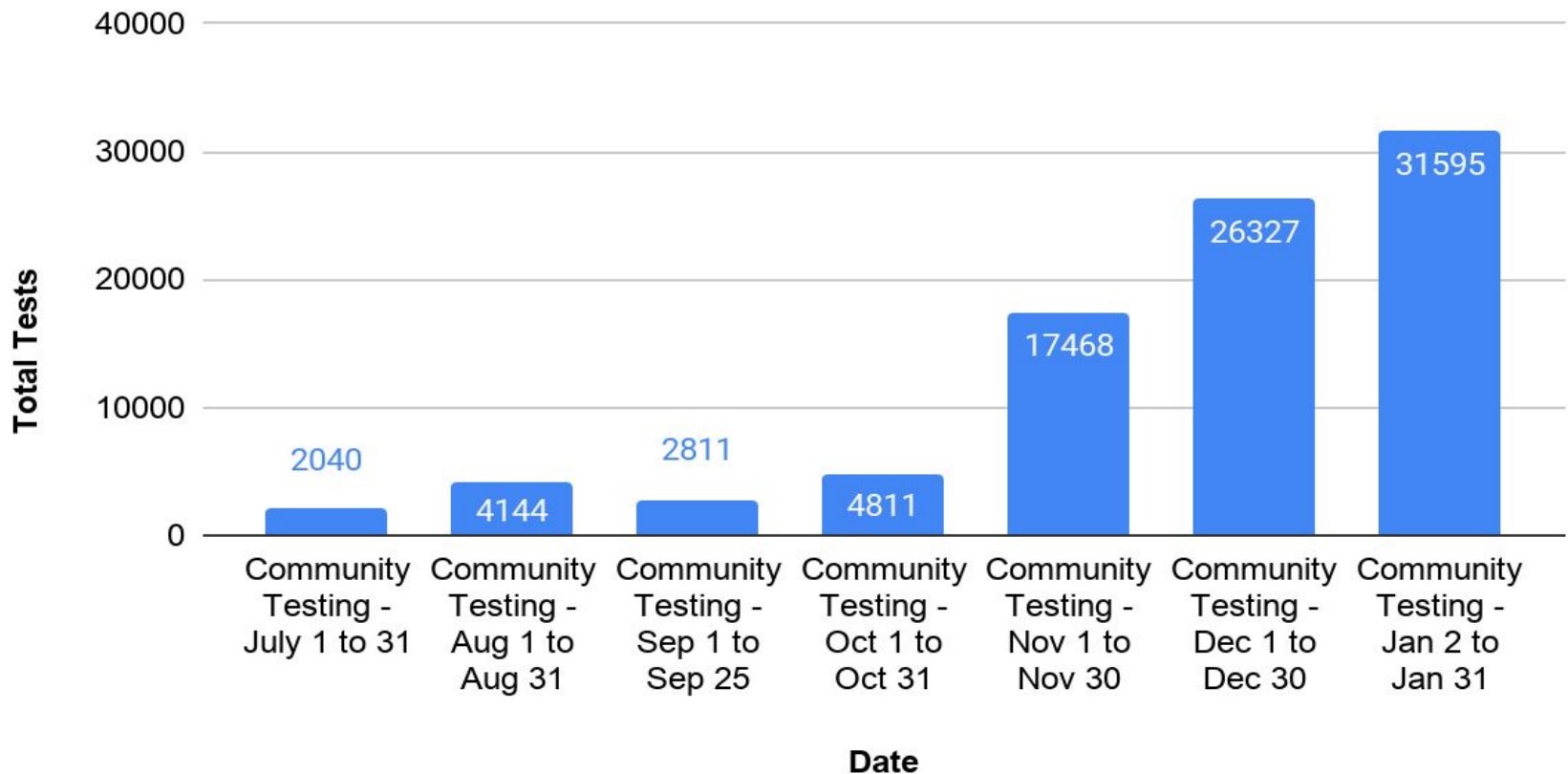
(7-day average for Jan. 24–Jan 30)

Test Positivity²

- 1.31% (2-week period ending Jan. 23)

COVID-19 Community Testing

Community Testing - Total Tests per Month



COVID-19 Vaccine Update

COVID-19 Vaccination in MA: Phase 1 & 2 Eligibility Status

Phase 1

All phase 1 priority groups

All Eligible

Phase 2

1

Individuals age 75+

Eligible 2/1

2

Individuals 65+ and individuals with 2+ comorbidities

Not yet eligible

3

Early education and K-12 workers, transit, grocery, utility, food and agriculture, sanitation, public works, and public health workers

Not yet eligible

4

Individuals with 1 comorbidity

Not yet eligible

State COVID-19 Vaccine Update

- Massachusetts and the nation are experiencing a severe vaccine shortage.
- The state is “triaging” its limited vaccine supply: greater allocations going to regional mass vaccination sites; smaller allocations to cities/towns.
- The state is “capping” vaccines requests from local health departments at 100 doses a week through February.
- As of Jan. 27, MA providers had administered 523,721 doses, which was 67% of the state’s vaccine supply. As of early last week, the state had distributed 98% of its vaccine supply.

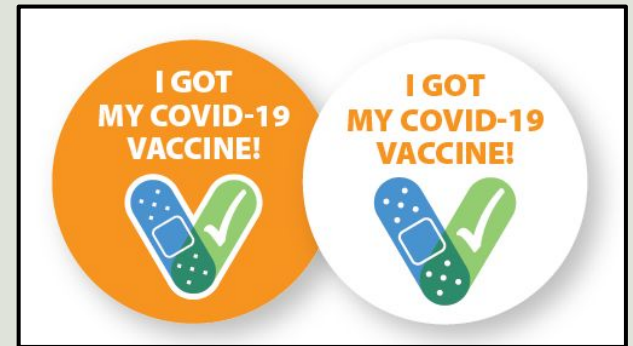


Photograph: Michael Holahan/AP

City Vaccine Update - *Phase 1*

The Cambridge Pandemic Collaborative (CPC), led by Public Health, Fire, Police and Pro EMS, vaccinated 1,231 people in Phase 1 groups:

- **First Responders:** 909 Phase 1 eligible people were vaccinated from Jan. 11–15 at CambridgeSide; predominantly first responders.
- **People Experiencing Homelessness:** 322 clients/staff of homeless shelters and meals programs were vaccinated.



City Vaccine Update - *Phase 2*

Cambridge Public Health Department vaccination plans:

- **Priority Group 1: People age 75 and older:** If/until CPHD receives a greater vaccination allocation, residents age 75+ will receive vaccine through their medical providers, pharmacies, or mass vax sites.
- **Priority Group 2: People age 65+ and those with 2 comorbidities.** See bullet above.
- **Priority Group 2: Residents and staff of low income and affordable senior housing.** CPHD is working with the state so that the CPC will be able to offer on-site vaccination clinics at eligible senior housing complexes.

Vaccine Outreach - *Phase 2*

Outreach to Senior Housing Residents

- The Cambridge Community Corps (C3) will be going to all senior buildings to gather information for registration; CPHD will enter the information on day of vaccination so seniors won't have to call/go online.
- C3 members will also inquire about seniors' interest in being vaccinated, hesitancy, and other needs and concerns.
- Begin February 1 at Manning Apartments; February 2 at Miller's River.
- Onsite vaccination of residents on **February 4 and 5.**

Phase 2 Planning

- CPHD has capacity to vaccinate 500 people/day based on the experience with the first responder clinics.

Vaccinating CPS Staff and Teachers

- Teachers are eligible to be vaccinated in the third priority group of Phase 2.
- CPHD is advocating for additional vaccine supply in order to set up a CPS staff vaccination clinic.
- If CPHD does not receive this vaccine supply, CPHD teachers and staff will be eligible to sign up online and travel to one of the designated mass vaccination sites or participating pharmacies.
- Should the state provide us with the supply needed, we would be in a position to vaccinate the ~3,000 staff and teachers at CPS.

COVID Vaccine Communication

- **Daily communications** via City website/daily emails, social media is ongoing.
- **FAQs:** Easy-to-read vaccine FAQs have been developed and shared in the following ways:
 - Used to respond to resident inquiries.
 - Used in CPHD staff's day-to-day work in community.
- **Interviews** with community members and community leaders are in process and will inform vaccine messaging.
- **Town Hall** series is under development.

COVID-19 Testing in K-12 Schools

CPS staff are being tested twice a week, on a voluntary basis, as part of a CPHD surveillance program. Testing is also offered to symptomatic students who become ill at school and student athletes.

13,091 Tests

Tests administered to CPS staff through the voluntary testing program since Oct. 15

11X

Median number of times a CPS staff member has gotten tested through the program since Oct. 15

1,182 Staff Tested

Total # of CPS staff who have been tested through the voluntary testing program since Oct. 15

300 students

Symptomatic CPS students and student athletes who have been tested through the program since Oct. 15

Data reflect Oct. 15- Jan. 31

COVID-19 Variants

- As of Feb. 2, five travel-associated cases of the B.1.1.7 variant (which emerged in the U.K.), have been discovered in MA.
- According to our state health partners, there is no evidence of widespread community transmission of the B.1.1.7 variant in MA at this time.
- Two other variants of concern—the P.1 variant (which emerged in Brazil) and B.1.351 (which emerged in South Africa)—have been detected in the U.S., but not in Massachusetts to date.
- With the recent arrival of more transmissible variants in the U.S., genetic analysis has been ramping up in MA.
- According to our state partners, the Broad Institute is planning to scale up to do 1,000 samples a week. Other labs involved in this statewide effort are the State Public Health Laboratory, LabCorp, Quest, and academic labs.

Wastewater Surveillance Update

- Nine weeks of data indicate Cambridge wastewater counts are *consistently lower* than comparable regional MWRA counts
 - Helps to validate the many efforts and individual acts of caution that the Cambridge community and administration have taken during the pandemic.
- EAP examines the results and trends from these data at each meeting and has observed some predictive value.
- We expect that early signs of a new spike in transmission, after a period of low transmission, will be seen in these data.