



MEMORANDUM

TO: Select Board

FROM: John C. Curran, Town Manager

CC: Clancy Main, Assistant Town Manager
Andrew Levine, Director of Administrative Services

SUBJECT: Town Manager's Report, September 27, 2021

DATE: September 24, 2021

Precinct Update:

On Tuesday September 21st the Secretary of State released the updated precinct map to the Town. The new map includes an additional 12th precinct. Precinct 12 includes old parts of precinct 1, 11, and 6. According to the first draft it seems precinct 10 will be the only one that remains fully intact. Some minor adjustments may be made by the Town Clerk in regard to the precinct borders. The State recommends that the Town use natural boundaries between precincts (ex: railroad tracks or major roads)

The new map needs to be voted on by the Board of Selectmen by October 30th. I will have the Town Clerk be available to present the new map prior to that deadline.

Attached as a separate item is the map.

Personnel Update:

As of the writing of this report the Library Director and Veterans Director position have closed.

The Veterans Director position has received 18 resumes. Almost all of the candidates are uniquely qualified for the role in some manner. Specifically seven or eight stand out above the others. Many of these have advanced degrees (social work, nursing, MPA), currently serve as a Veterans Director in another community, or currently has a similar role to that of a Veterans Director. I expect those to interviews to begin the week of October 11th.

The Library Director position had close to 15 applicants. Currently the screening committee is scheduled to meet with the first round of applicants on October 12th and October 14th.

One HMEO has been hired in the Highway Dept with still one opening available. There is also an opening for night shift operator at the Water Department.

Middlesex 3

On Thursday, September 23, I spoke at a virtual meeting organized by the Middlesex 3 Coalition specifically on developments in Billerica. The main topics included public infrastructure projects taking place and many of the positive trends in new industrial developments that are bringing new jobs to town. After the meeting many prominent employers and businesses including Curriculum Associates, Lantheus, Farley White, and AHA Engineers we're looking to connect on what's next in Billerica.

Green Communities

The Town is working with the Northern Middlesex Council of Governments (NMCOG) to complete the Annual Report for Green Communities, which is due in mid-November. There is also an open grant round for \$200,000 in Green Communities funding that will close on October 8. This office is coordinating with the Building and Facilities Departments to prioritize projects that can be submitted in this grant round. We are following the strategy laid out in our 2018 Energy Reduction Plan and are considering weatherization, LED light conversion, and energy controls systems along other major capital improvements.

Vining and Ditson Schools

The demolition of the Ditson School is complete and the former site has been hydroseeded and will stay fenced off for the grass to grow. The fence is tentatively scheduled to stay up until the first snowfall.

At the Vining School, the contractor discovered underground asbestos pipes at the end of August, beginning a DEP monitored removal process. The contractor has nearly completed with removing the pipes, which resulted in a change order of roughly \$150,000. Even with this change, the project is anticipated to finish well under budget, and will finish in October.

Capital Facilities Needs Committee

The Capital Facilities Needs Committee met on Wednesday, September 22 to review the preliminary report from consultant Tom Scarlata of BH+A. The report included an assessment of the conditions at the Council on Aging and Recreation buildings and an estimate of the amount of space they would need in order to provide their desired level of services. The Committee will plan to visit communities that have built combined facilities that accommodate both Recreation Departments and their Councils on Aging to assess whether that would be a feasible model for Billerica. In addition, a field lab class from the Harvard Kennedy School plans to work with the committee and consultant to help with the community engagement and surveying of the public between the two public forums. This team is being formed now and will be introduced to the Committee and the consultant in the coming weeks. The Committee will meet next on October 20th.

Peggy Hannon-Rizza Recreation Complex

On Wednesday, September 22nd this office met with Michelle Vichot, the Executive Director of the Boys & Girls Club of Greater Billerica, as well CFO Dave Bruce and Unit Director Dickie Ackroyd. David Warner from Warner Larson Landscape Architects presented the updated plans for the PHR Complex so the organization would know what will be coming next and how it will affect them. They had questions about snow removal, dumpster placement, and the traffic plan, and were overall very happy with the plan and look forward to its development.

Library LSTA Grant Completed

Last December the Billerica Public Library was awarded a Federal Library Service and Technology grant for \$7500 from the Mass. Board of Library Commissioners that would provide community members with programs and library materials about healthy aging. The grant was entitled "Aging in Place: Keeping Seniors Age 60-70 Connected to the Community" and was 1 of only 40 grants awarded by MBLC in a competitive grant round.

Lizzie Meier, Community Services and Adult Programming Librarian, author and manager of the grant, felt that the timing was perfect due to the ongoing pandemic. Meier said “it is more important now than ever to foster community, promote health and connect people with resources and each other.” From January 2021 – September 2021, seventeen programs were held via zoom. Topics ranged from decluttering and rightsizing to mindfulness, health care decisions, financial issues, gardening and a virtual live piano bar. Most of these events were recorded by BATV and were very well received by the target community.

Money from this grant was also used to add new materials to our specialty item collection for seniors with memory issues or for seniors who act as caretakers of loved ones dealing with these issues. Reminiscence kits on various topics such as dogs and cats, the great outdoors and remembering the 1950's were purchased. These kits are designed to bring happiness and comfort based on an individual's favorite things and used to rouse emotions and making connections by sharing memories.

The library worked closely through Lizzie with local organizations such as BATV, Billerica Council on Aging, the Billerica Veterans Department, and the Billerica Housing Authority to reach as much of the community as possible and we were delighted with the results.

Council on Aging Update

NEW COMPANIONS: We hired four new companions to add capacity to grow our Respite Program. This non-medical senior support program gives relief to family caregivers for a few hours or more weekly so that they can effectively care for themselves as they undertake the challenges of family caregiving. We urge everyone to promote this program as Covid did set us back in client volume and FY2022 revenues. Carolyn Savio the Coordinator of the program, (978-671-0916, X 2010) is highly qualified to grow the program through a multi-pronged approach of marketing to healthcare professionals at Emerson, Lahey and Lowell General and key community referral sites, upgrading our marketing materials and expanding our geography over time to abutting towns.

THANK YOU, SENATOR: On Monday, 9/20th, town leaders, Select Board Members Burrows and Burns and officials joined the Town Manager, our Board and staff in thanking Senator Cindy Friedman for helping us to acquire \$85,000 of support in the FY2022 state budget. We also thanked Rep Marc Lombardo, who like the Senator has been physically in our space multiple times and recognized the need for upgrading. The goal is to overhaul the Outreach Department which is the town's human services hub that now lacks privacy for case management and is very cramped. We also plan to increase the ambiance and appeal of our professional meeting space on the second floor. We need proper storage for the supplies of the Knitting, Quilting and Ceramics groups that affords multi-use, easy turn around among sessions and neatness. Bathrooms in the lobby need to be overhauled. We need to regain the staff break space so that when the intensity of delivering aging services, taxing caregiver requests, sadness and sorrow of walk-ins and case complexity overwhelm, there is a dedicated space that allows staff to pause and regain perspective.

HOLIDAY RAFFLE: Please buy a few raffle tickets from our Friends major Fundraiser that supplements town funding for exercise classes and more. First prize is \$2,000, second prize is \$300 with 10 consolation prizes of \$50 each. Buy your ticket today at the BCOA, 8.30 AM to 4 PM, Monday to Friday, \$10 each. Drawing December 15th at the BCOA, 3 PM.

Covid 19 Update

The Town is moving in the right direction. Billerica is now similar to the State and County numbers. We are still classified as high transmission because our cumulative 7-day average is 133 per 100K (33 over the threshold). The positivity rate has dipped below 5% again.

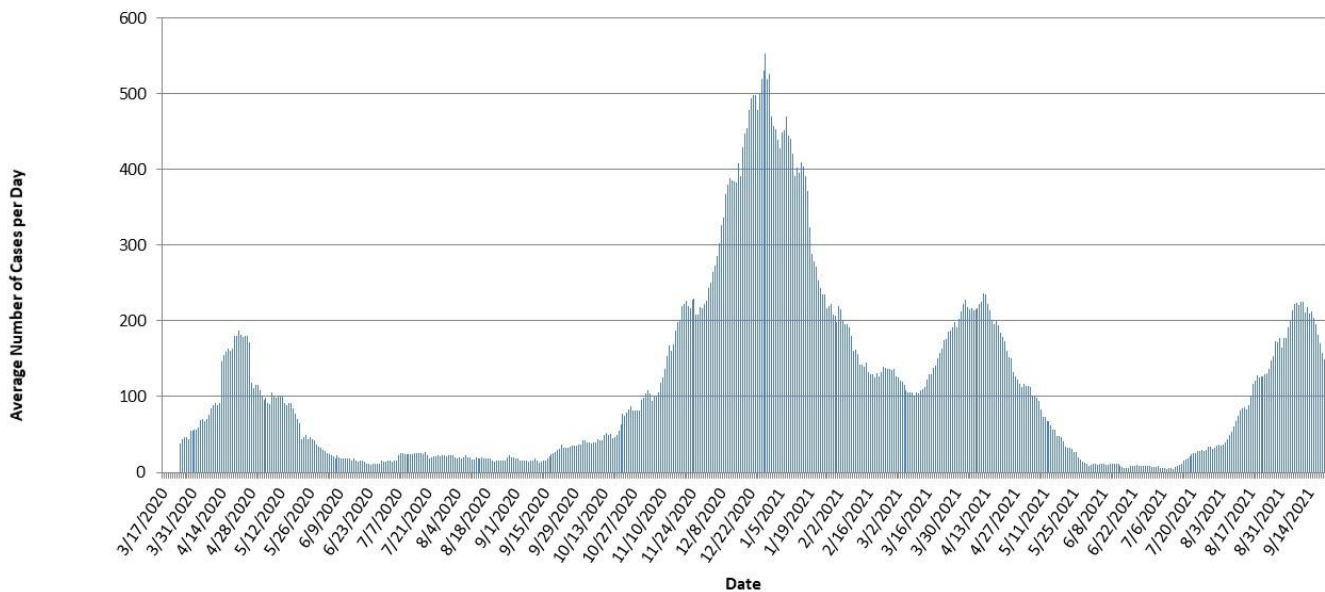


Long Term Care Facilities	122
Middlesex House of Corrections	106
Health Care Workers	123
Apartment Complexes	366
Deaths	37
Active Cases	101
Recovered Cases	4469
Total Cases to Date	4607
Cases per 100,000	25.27
Seven Day Case Average	8.00
Number of Cases last 14 days	149
Positivity Rate	4.37%
Billerica Status	High Transmission
Vaccination Rate	68%
7 Day Cumulative per 100K	133

Tuesday, September 21, 2021

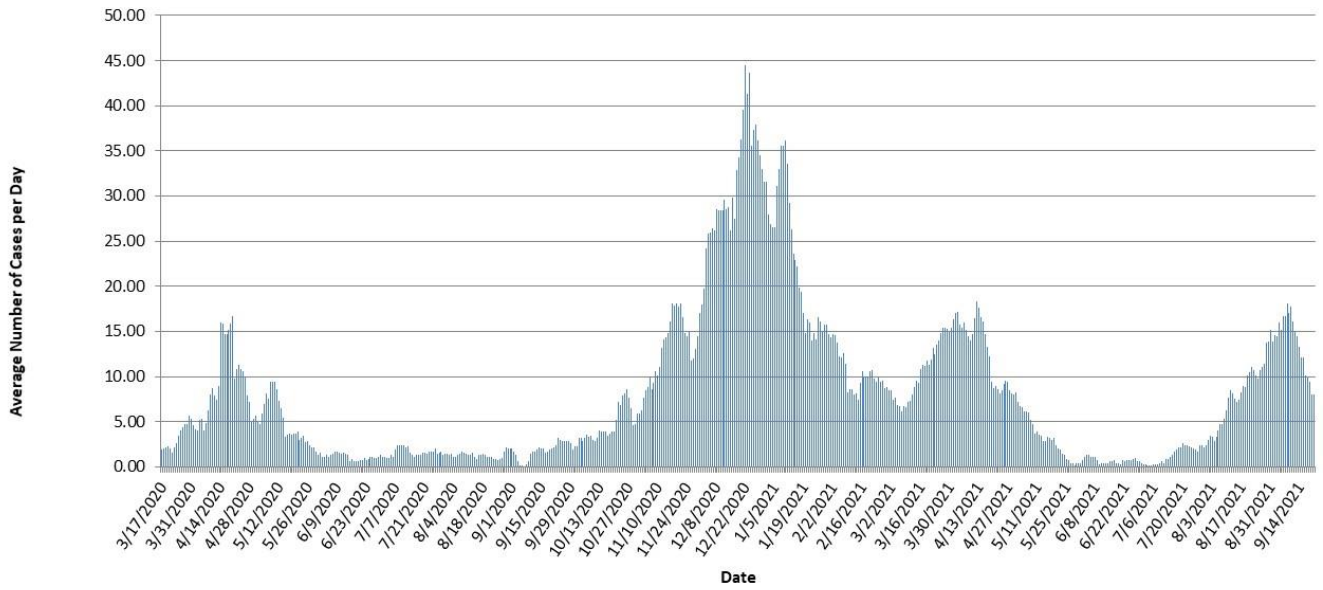
Source: Billerica Board of Health

**Town of Billerica COVID 19 Cases
Active Cases (As Of September 21st)**



Source: Billerica Board of Health

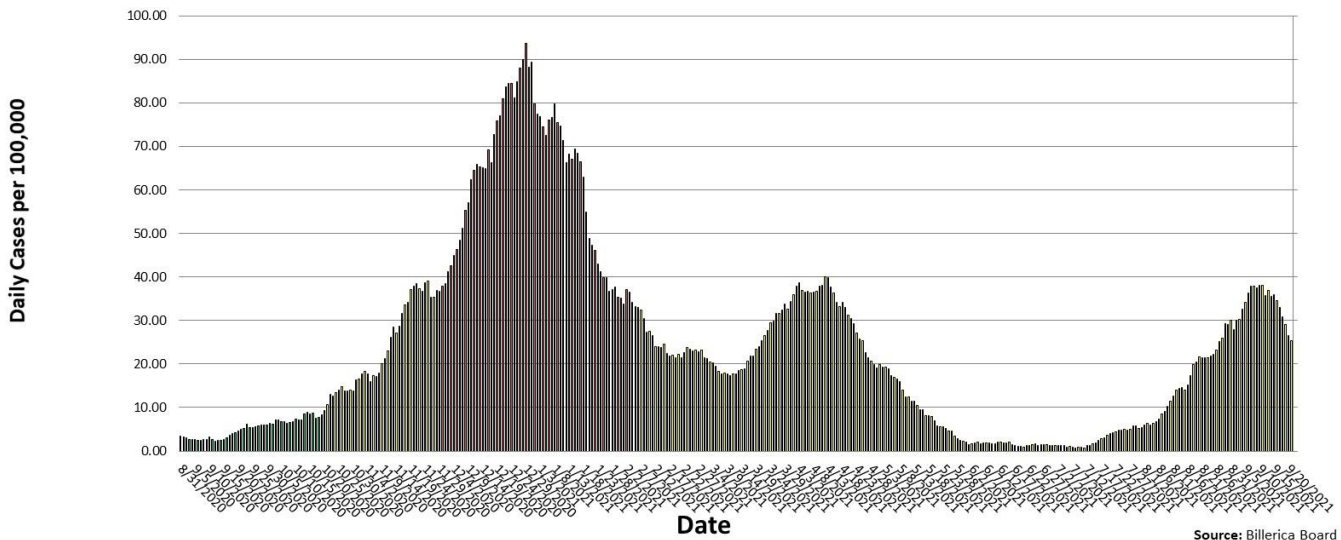
Town of Billerica 7-Day Average As of September 21st



Source: Billerica Board of Health

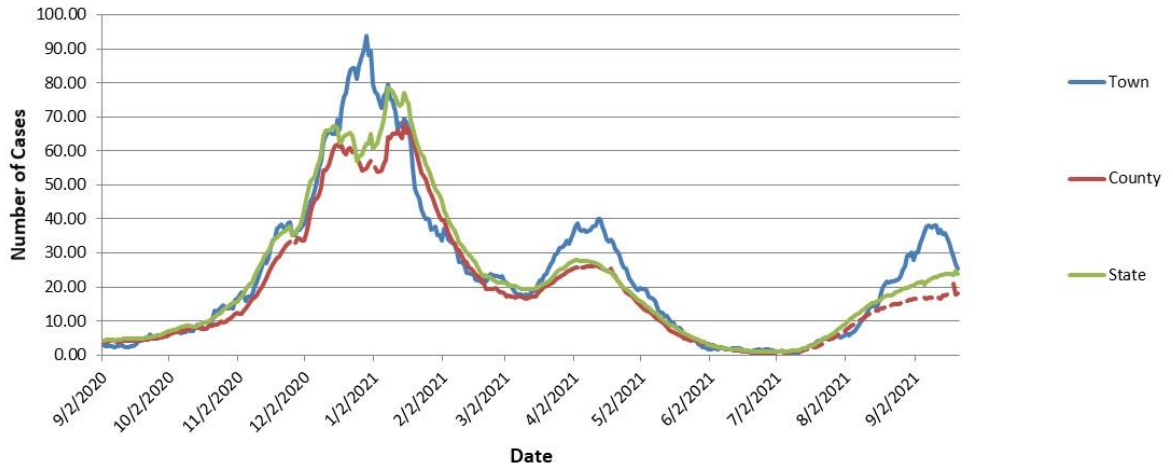
Town of Billerica Average Daily Cases per 100,000 People

Billerica's positivity rate is 4.37%



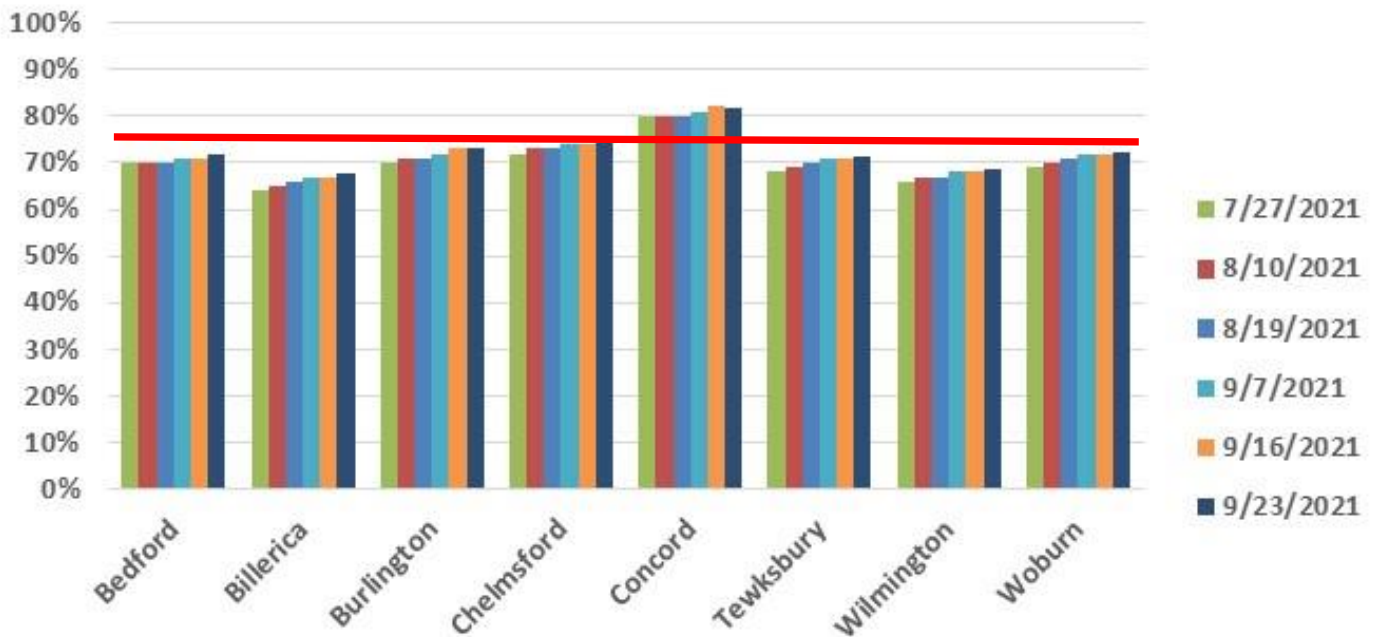
Source: Billerica Board of Health

Billerica vs. County and Commonwealth Average Cases per 100,000 people over 14 days



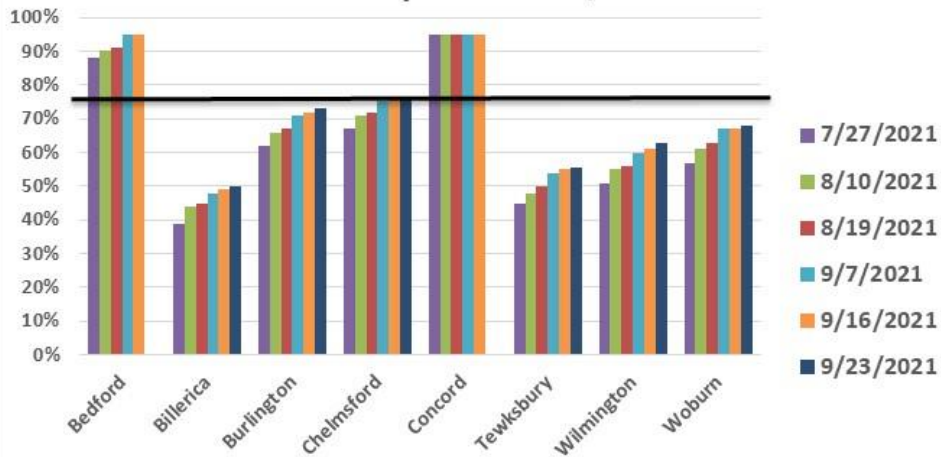
Source: Billerica Board of Health

Total Vaccinated % As of September 23, 2021



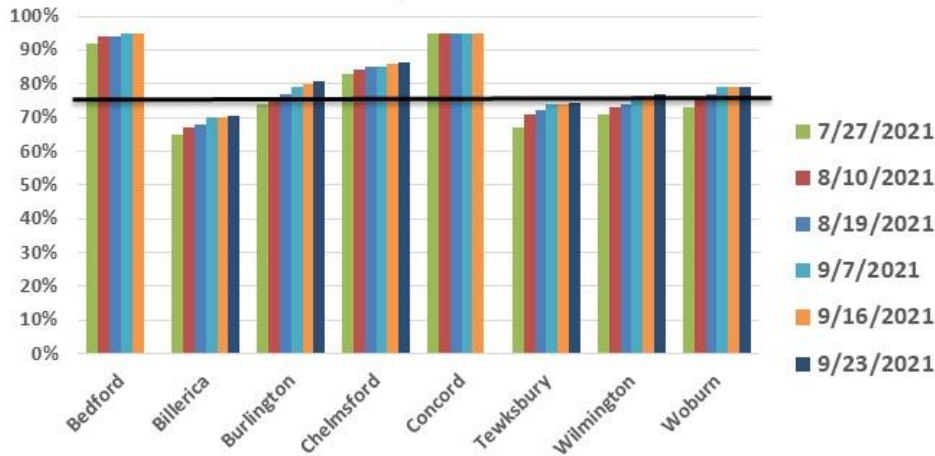
Source: Massachusetts Department of Public Health

Vaccinated % of 12-15 Year Olds As of September 23, 2021



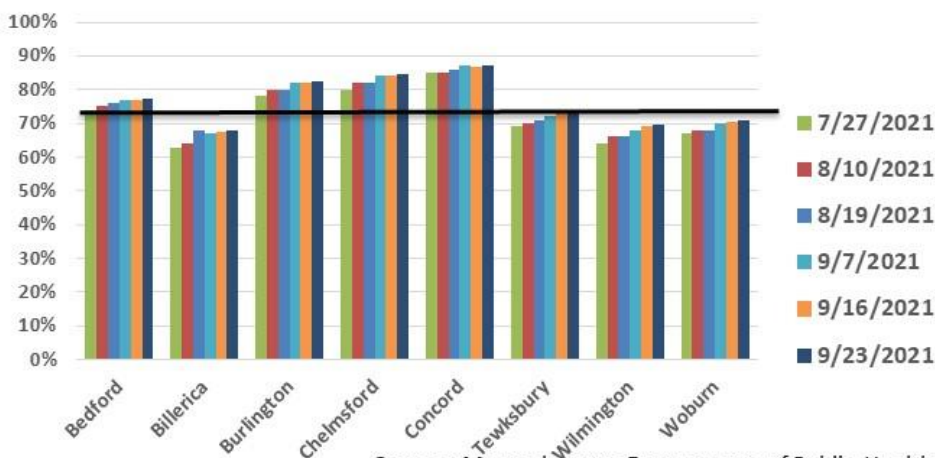
Source: Massachusetts Department of Public Health

Vaccinated % of 16-19 Year Olds As of September 23, 2021



Source: Massachusetts Department of Public Health

Vaccinated % of 20-29 Year Olds As of September 23, 2021



Source: Massachusetts Department of Public Health