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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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PROVINCETOWN'S CONTINUED RESPONSE TO COVID-19 CASES *Update #2: Case Data and Surveillance Efforts*

PROVINCETOWN, MA – Provincetown continues to work closely with county and state health officials to track and respond to the evolving COVID-19 cluster. Expanded testing and vaccination will continue through July 30th and have thus far proved to be vital tools in the response effort as participation numbers increase daily.

Surveillance Data

As of Friday, July 23rd, **430** confirmed positive cases of COVID-19 had been officially reported to the Massachusetts Department of Public Health associated with the Provincetown cluster. Of these cases, **342** are Massachusetts residents, **153** of which reside in Provincetown. The remainder of individuals who tested positive reside in other states.

Cases among Massachusetts residents are found to be predominantly symptomatic (71%), with 69% of affected individuals reported to be fully vaccinated. Apart from 3 hospitalizations (2 in state and one out of state) associated with this cluster, symptoms are known to be mild and without complication.

Case investigation to determine the extent of the Provincetown cluster is ongoing and multi-jurisdictional, with involvement from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and other municipal public health authorities throughout the state of Massachusetts. Genetic sequencing, a multi-step process that takes several weeks to complete, is being conducted at the Massachusetts State Public Health Laboratory and other labs to determine whether a variant of concern is associated with the cluster. Officials are awaiting these results and will share them as they become available.

Daily testing of wastewater in Provincetown will commence today. Wastewater testing has been a valuable surveillance tool and was conducted in Provincetown throughout the pandemic. The last wastewater sampling was conducted in Provincetown in spring 2021. Going forward, the wastewater testing data will indicate the presence of COVID-19 in the 50% of the buildings in Provincetown connected to the town's sewer. Given the current cluster, presence of COVID-19 in wastewater sampling tests is expected.

Observed Improvement of Test Positivity Rates

Testing is the best way for health officials to gauge the impact of a cluster and the success of measures that are being taken to reduce viral spread. The number of cases is expected to rise as more individuals take advantage of testing opportunities available in Provincetown and surrounding areas. Further, test positivity rates (the number of tests that come back positive in relation to the total number of tests) have improved since surveillance of the Provincetown cluster began, from 15% to 9%. A test positivity rate of <5% is considered progress towards cluster containment, while a testing positivity rate of <1% is considered fully contained.

Testing, Vaccination and Observance of Precautionary Measures Remain Essential

Public health authorities continue to strongly urge residents, local businesses, and visitors in and around Provincetown to follow the precautions outlined in the advisory released Monday, July 19 regardless of vaccination status.

Anyone experiencing even mild symptoms should get tested, as well as anyone who has had a close contact with an individual who has tested positive for COVID-19. Testing is encouraged regardless of vaccination status.

Vaccines remain the single most important tool to combat COVID-19. As the proportion of vaccinated individuals increase, there will be more cases in people who have been fully vaccinated. COVID-19 vaccines do not prevent all infections, but they are 90-95% effective in preventing severe disease.

Additional information about vaccination and testing in Provincetown and elsewhere in the region can be found on the [Provincetown](#) and [Barnstable County](#) websites.

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