



MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION INDEPENDENT COVID-19 UPDATE & MITIGATION COMPLIANCE REPORT

PREPARED EXCLUSIVELY FOR:
JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY
AND
JOINT COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HEALTH

SUBMITTED BY:

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REPORT: No. 14



INDEX

INTRODUCTORY COMMUNICATION.....	1
BI-WEEKLY REPORT RECORD TO MA STATE LEGISLATURE.....	2
<i>Reports Submitted</i>	2
<i>Forthcoming Reports</i>	2
MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION INTERACTIONS.....	2
OFFICE-ESTABLISHED STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES	3
WEBSITE UPDATES.....	5
DOC FACILITY VIDEO REVIEW.....	5
<i>Overview</i>	5
<i>Tracking Mechanism</i>	5
<i>Observations and Compliance with Office-established Standards</i>	6
MEETINGS WITH INTERESTED THIRD PARTIES.....	6
INQUIRIES – CALLS AND EMAILS	6
SPOTLIGHT ON BOSTON PRE-RELEASE CENTER.....	7
ENVIRONMENTAL TESTING	10
<i>Overview</i>	10
MA DOC COVID-19 RESURGENCE RISK MONITORING DASHBOARD	10
<i>Trends and Analysis</i>	10
ATTACHMENT A	12



INTRODUCTORY COMMUNICATION

JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY
Senate Contact
24 Beacon St.
Room 511-C
Boston, MA 02133

JOINT COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HEALTH
Senate Contact
24 Beacon St.
Room 413-C
Boston, MA 02133

JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY
House Contact
24 Beacon St.
Room 136
Boston, MA 02133

JOINT COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HEALTH
House Contact
24 Beacon St.
Room 130
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Honorable Members of the Joint Committee on the Judiciary and Joint Committee on Public Health:

On behalf of the Office of the Ombudsman (Office), I respectfully submit the enclosed as the next in a series of reports independently monitoring the Massachusetts Department of Correction's (DOC) efforts to mitigate and control the SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) pandemic in its correctional facilities.

The Office is pleased to provide this bi-weekly report (*Report No. 14*) updating the honorable members of both the Joint Committee on the Judiciary and the Joint Committee on Public Health on multiple aspects of the Office's independent compliance monitoring role. This report includes updates on interactions with the DOC and other interested third parties, as applicable; video review of DOC compliance with Office-established standards; updates on Office-established standards; commencement of Lighthouse EIP's environmental cleaning and education program; spotlight on Boston Pre-Release Center; and the MA DOC COVID-19 Resurgence Risk Monitoring Dashboard.

Thank you for your time and attention. Please reach out should you have any questions on this report or any aspect related to the Office.

Respectfully,

DocuSigned by:



110E4A4513D64B5
Lauren M. "Laurie" Andersen, MM, RN, CEN, CCRN
Director/Ombudsman
Office of the Ombudsman

BI-WEEKLY REPORT RECORD TO MA STATE LEGISLATURE

Reports Submitted	
Report No:	Date Delivered:
Report 01	Wednesday, September 15, 2021
Report 02	Wednesday, September 29, 2021
Report 03	Wednesday, October 13, 2021
Report 04	Wednesday, October 27, 2021
Report 05	Wednesday, November 10, 2021
Report 06	Wednesday, November 24, 2021
Report 07	Wednesday, December 8, 2021
Report 08	Wednesday, December 22, 2021
Report 09	Wednesday, January 5, 2022
Report 10	Wednesday, January 19, 2022
Report 11	Wednesday, February 2, 2022
Report 12	Wednesday, February 16, 2022
Report 13	Wednesday, March 02, 2022
Report 14*	Wednesday, March 16, 2022

* *This Report.*

Forthcoming Reports	
Report No:	Due Date:
Report 15**	Wednesday, March 30, 2022
Report 16**	Wednesday, April 6, 2022
Report 17**	Wednesday, April 20, 2022
Report 18**	Wednesday, May 4, 2022
Report 19**	Wednesday, May 18, 2022
Report 20**	Wednesday, June 1, 2022
Report 21**	Wednesday, June 15, 2022
Report 22**	Wednesday, June 29, 2022
End of FY 2022	

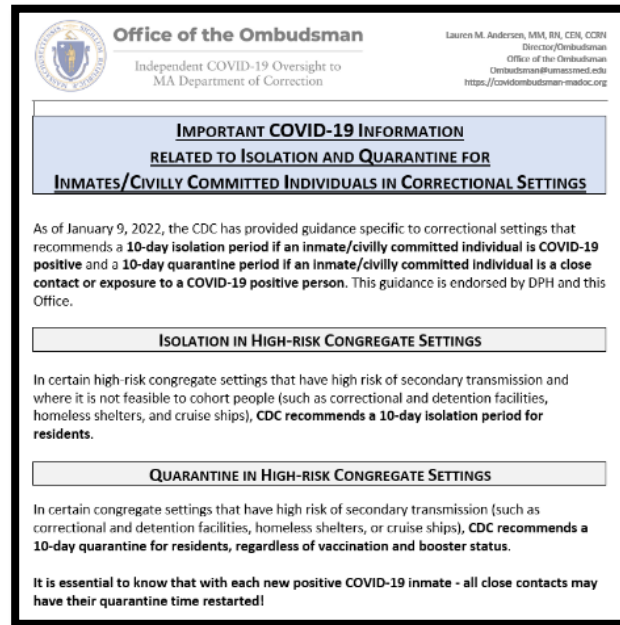
** *Anticipated.*

MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION INTERACTIONS

Over the last two weeks, Lauren M. “Laurie” Andersen, director/ombudsman for the Office (Ombudsman), held regularly scheduled meetings with Carol A. Mici, commissioner of the Massachusetts Department of Correction (Commissioner Mici). Topics covered included:

- COVID-19 update including no cases for inmates and three cases for DOC staff;
- Education about what programming includes;
- Investigation into advancing public health standards;

In addition, on January 14, 2022, the Office circulated a one-page document to all DOC facilities alerting them to changes in CDC-recommended quarantine and isolation guidelines. This document clarifies the CDC guidelines on correctional settings and the isolation and quarantine time for such settings.



As of February 28, 2022, the Office recommended reducing the social distancing guidelines from six feet to three feet. This reduction in social distancing space will allow more inmates to participate in programming, classes, and work environments. The reduction to three feet will allow a better quality of life for the inmates and fulfill mandatory education needs for some. This decision was based on the low COVID-19 infection rates in DOC staff and inmates at all facilities.

New Social Distancing Guidance
<p>The recommendation in reducing the social distancing from six feet to three feet was based on the following considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Low COVID-19 numbers in staff and inmates; ➤ All staff and inmates will continue to wear masks properly while indoors; ➤ Hand sanitizer needs to be available and used for hand hygiene as needed; ➤ COVID-19 infection rates remain below 5% in the applicable DOC facility; and ➤ Ongoing testing for staff and inmates as established. <p>This change to the social distancing standard will remain in place as long as the COVID-19 rates for the DOC staff, inmates, and in the Commonwealth generally remain stable or improve.</p>

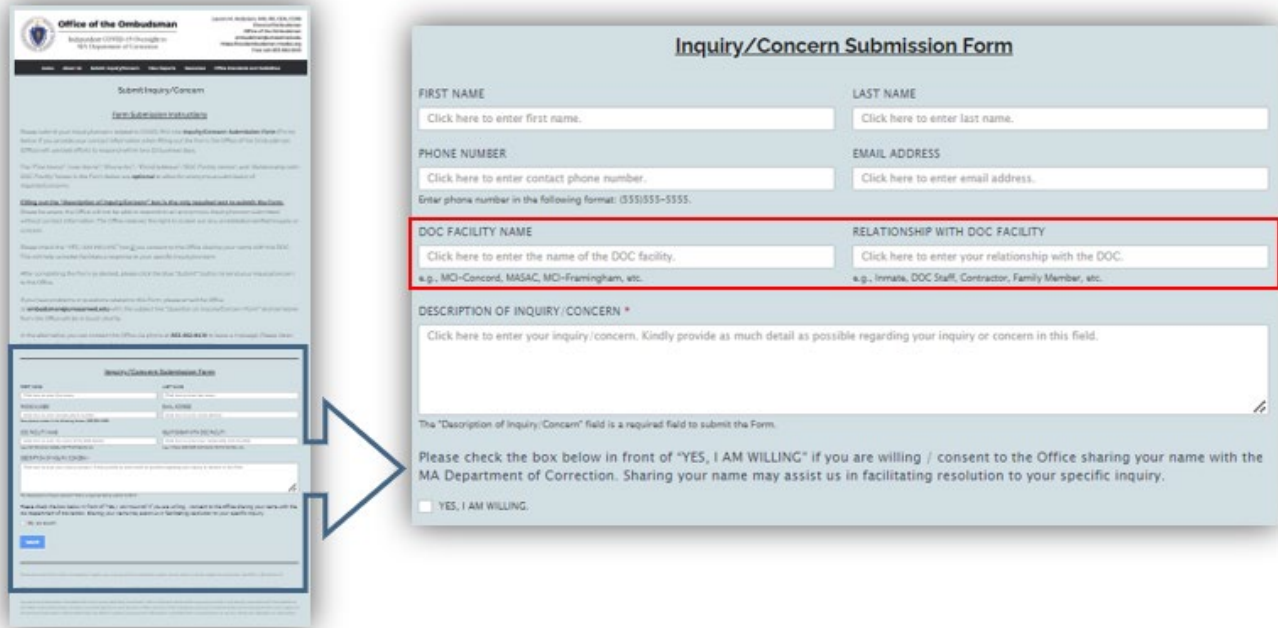
The Office's [SARS-COV-2 Public Health Compliance and Mitigation Standards](#) and the [Massachusetts Department of Correction Staff and Inmate Quarantine, Isolation, and Testing Guidelines](#) have been updated to reflect changes.

WEBSITE UPDATES

The Office has updated the inquiry/concern submission form to capture additional information regarding the specific DOC facility that the inquiry is related to, as well as the individual’s relationship to that DOC facility (e.g., inmate, staff, family member).

The form is live on the Office website at the following link: <https://covidombudsman-madoc.org/submit-inquiry-concern/>.

By collecting this information, the Office will be better able to identify trends at specific facilities – for example, lack of masking at DOC facility X, or improper hand hygiene at DOC facility Y.



DOC FACILITY VIDEO REVIEW

Overview

As part of the Office’s oversight of DOC efforts to mitigate COVID-19 in correctional facilities across the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the Office reviews video footage from the various DOC facilities weekly to do a retrospective review of how individual DOC facilities are dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic and the Office-established Standards.

Tracking Mechanism

The Office has developed and is utilizing a custom-built tracking module for video review. The purpose of this tracking module is to uniformly weigh and assess video observations equitably across DOC facilities and collect data to analyze trends and identify COVID-19 mitigation gaps and areas for improvement.

Observations and Compliance with Office-established Standards

Generally, DOC facility video consists of segments of up to five minutes for all areas at each DOC facility. The Ombudsman has continued to work on obtaining more transparent video segments by requesting changes in the timing of video footage weekly. The process is now a retrospective process where the Office chooses a variable date and time from the preceding week to request video footage from. The improvements in the video review have been made with the cooperation and collaboration of the DOC and Jay Diaz.

The video review for the past two weeks has shown mask compliance for all DOC staff and officers.

The inmates continue to have some mask fatigue, especially at certain facilities, including MASAC at Plymouth and MCI-Norfolk. The superintendent of MCI-Norfolk and Commissioner Mici have been notified of ongoing non-compliance at MCI-Norfolk. Three units were noted to not be masking. Superintendent Alves sent an email to his deputies to have inmates follow Office-established standards.

Masking:	Mask compliance was excellent for DOC staff. Inmate mask compliance needs improvement at MASAC at Plymouth and MCI-Norfolk.
Social Distancing:	Compliant – social distancing noted in medication lines and classrooms.
Hand Washing:	Difficult to assess – not observed in the videos.
Cleaning:	Difficult to assess – spray cleaning noted at all DOC facilities.

MEETINGS WITH INTERESTED THIRD PARTIES

On Friday, March 4, 2022, the Ombudsman and the Office's Regional Clinical Administrator (Regional Clinical Administrator) completed a series of visits to all fifteen facilities. These visits allowed the Office to check in with the facilities as well as provide the Regional Clinical Administrator an opportunity to become familiar with the individuality of each corrections facility.

On Monday, March 7, 2022, the Ombudsman met with Massachusetts State Representative Michael S. Day. An open conversation was held regarding the progress of the Office and Representative Day's availability and offer to be a support.

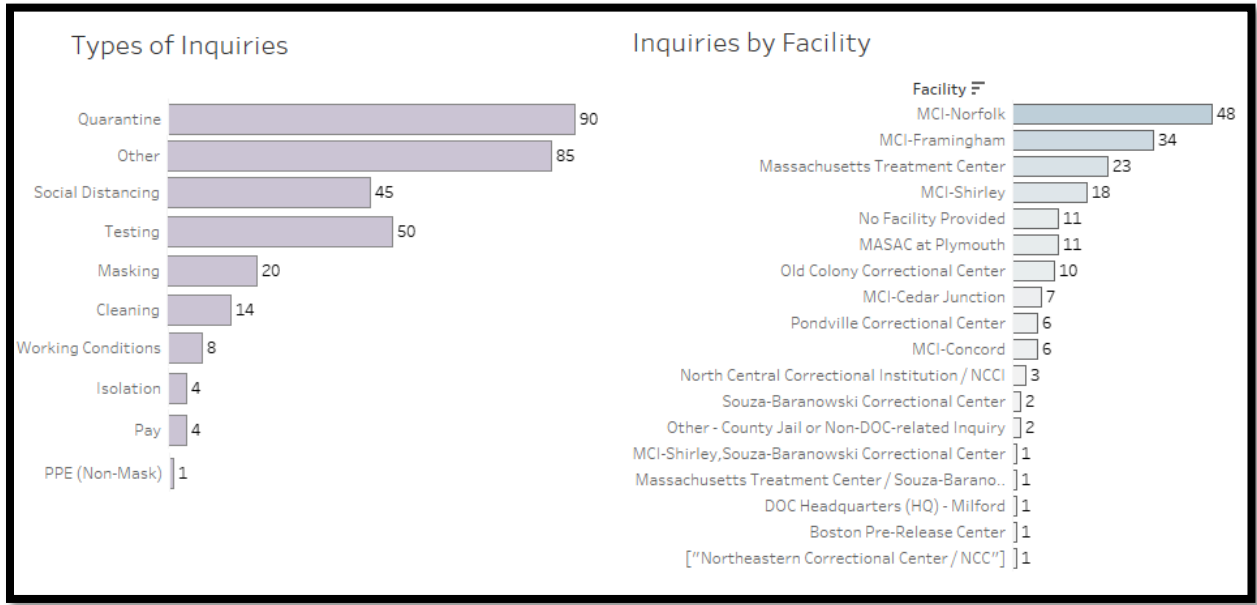
On Tuesday, March 8, 2022, the Ombudsman met in person with the leadership of the DOC and all the facilities to review the purpose of the Office and to offer support. The Office expressed appreciation for the work the DOC has accomplished throughout the COVID-19 pandemic at keeping the facilities functioning and compliant with COVID-19 standards.

As part of our work, the Office wants to share its mission and role with all who are invested in justice-involved populations. These meetings are a proactive way to meet and continue dialogue with other external groups and individuals that have a vested interest in COVID-19 mitigation in the DOC facilities. This relationship-building enhances transparency and advocacy as this Office moves forward in its work.

INQUIRIES – CALLS AND EMAILS

The Office continues to receive inquiries through email, postal mail, voice mail, and form submissions on the website in the past two weeks. The number of inquiries has decreased significantly as the COVID-19 surge has improved. The Office has been reviewing and investigating the highest priority concerns

immediately and gathering data on similar/related concerns for follow-up with DOC facility superintendents and Commissioner Mici.



SPOTLIGHT ON BOSTON PRE-RELEASE CENTER

The Office of the Ombudsman would like to acknowledge the Boston Pre-Release Center (BPRC) for their efforts and accomplishments in the mitigation of COVID-19. Superintendent Thomas Neville, Health and Safety Officer Matthew Knarr, and Head Nurse Courtney Kamborian, have demonstrated a collaborative approach with the BPRC team and this Office. They have displayed consistent and effective leadership at BPRC. Additionally, as confirmed by BPRC’s low COVID-19 positive count, video review, tours, and discussion with leadership, there is a culture at BPRC where staff and inmates are dedicated to the mission of COVID-19 mitigation and work together.

The Office of Ombudsman would like to share these accomplishments:

- Testing/Low positive COVID count:** Staff are presently surveillance tested at least every two weeks, and inmates are offered surveillance testing at least once per month. As of February 15, 2022, BPRC had only had one COVID-19 positive inmate since the onset of the pandemic. Recently during regular inmate surveillance testing on February 16, 2022, nine asymptomatic COVID-19 positive inmates were identified as COVID-19 positive bringing BPRC’s pandemic total to ten. The low number of COVID positives throughout the pandemic demonstrates BPRC’s efforts to sustain a universal commitment to the mitigation of COVID-19 have been successful.
- Vaccination:** Vaccination has also been a factor at BPRC. Per the Wellpath report, 88 percent of present-day BPRC inmates have been vaccinated and 66 percent have received boosters at this time. Per order of the Governor on October 2021 a state employee vaccine mandate for all DOC staff was put in place so now all current staff have been vaccinated.
- Mask Wearing:** Mask compliance at BPRC has been very good throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. As evidenced by weekly video review (10/24/21-2/19/2022), there have only been a few instances of “minor masking” violations; wearing masks incorrectly. Leadership reports that



there is a culture among inmates which appears to be reinforced by their desire to remain employed in the local community to be mask compliant.

- **Hand Washing/Environmental cleaning:** BPRC Inmates are provided regular access to cleaning supplies, soap, and hand sanitizer. Based on the inmate's overall compliance with protocols, access to cleaning supplies is available 24/7 and is used by the inmates to keep their personal areas and bathrooms clean. Inmates appear to feel a sense of pride in keeping themselves, and their living spaces, neat and tidy. As evidenced by video review and tours, hand sanitizer has been observed being utilized in the program. Leadership advised that there is also a hierarchy amongst inmates. According to staff, a new inmate who may not be following the standards is often quickly addressed by other inmates to ensure compliance. Staff are required to keep their areas clean and are advised by leadership to lead by example.
- **Social Distancing:** As evidenced by video review (10/24/21-2/19/2022), inmates and staff have not had any concerns noted with social distancing guidelines. Leadership reported that after years of required social distancing it has become engrained in staff and inmate behavior.

Some additional points that demonstrate BPRC's resiliency throughout the COVID-19 pandemic:

- Inmates are required to navigate the local bus and transit line to get to work. They are allotted a certain amount of time for arrival and return from employment venues. According to leadership, the trust displayed by this course appears to create an enhanced sense of personal responsibility in the inmate population.
- Staff advise that inmates appear to carry themselves with more self-confidence and awareness. These attributes are demonstrated in their interactions and daily lives at BPRC.
- As for staff, leadership reports that staff are aware of their accomplishments and successes at BPRC and appear to be motivated to ensure their success continues.

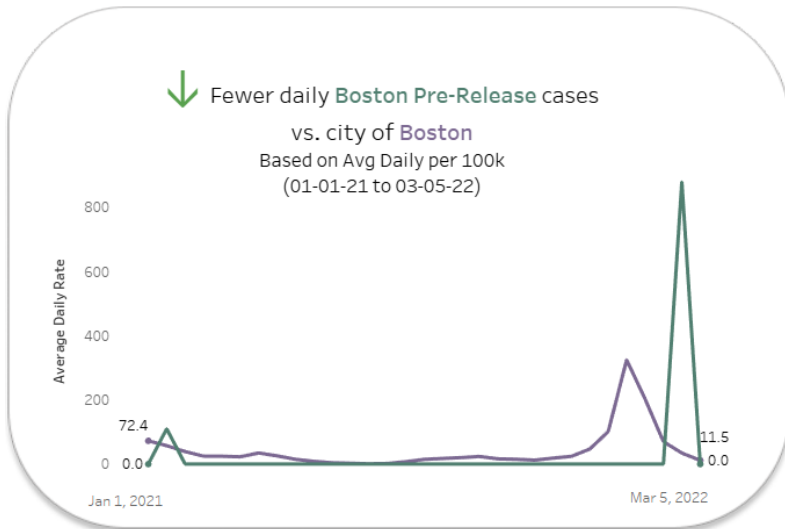
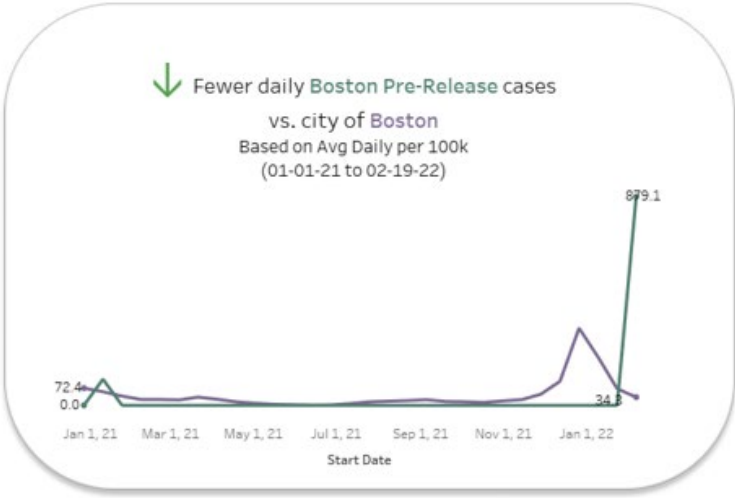
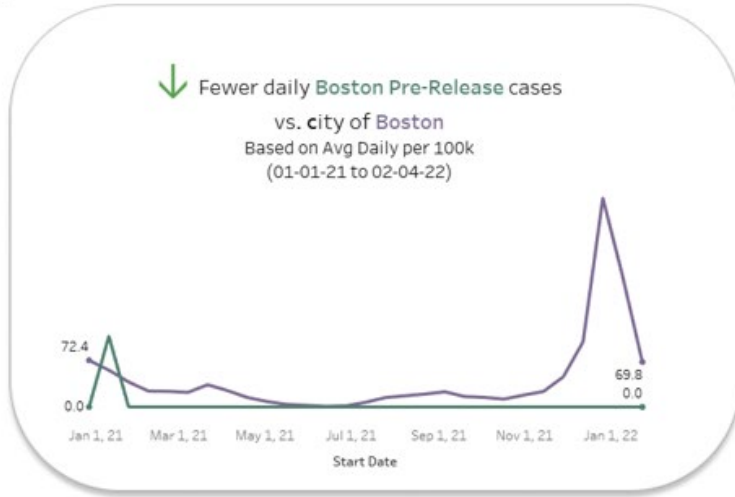
These points of information work together to contribute to increased compliance with the standards and success with keeping COVID-19 infections to a minimum.

BPRC leadership appears to have constructed a culture of checks and balances which are mirrored by officers and staff alike. Inmates appear to be motivated to comply through the desire for community integration, employment, facility standards, and their anticipated return to the community.

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Below is a comparison of the *City of Boston* to the *Boston Pre-Release Center*, average daily per 100K, 1/01/2021 to 2/04/2022, and average daily per 100K, 1/01/2021-2/19/2021.



ENVIRONMENTAL TESTING

Overview

The Office engaged Unimed MidWest, Inc. (doing business as Lighthouse Environmental Infection Prevention) (Lighthouse) to provide expert consultation and environmental testing services. Trained environmental infection prevention technicians from Lighthouse, experienced in environmental cleaning and disinfection, completed on-site facility-wide surveys at each DOC facility (excluding Lemuel Shattuck Hospital Correctional Unit) during the week of November 15, 2021. The Office shared the results with DOC leadership and superintendents at each DOC facility. A follow-up discussion occurred on January 5, 2022.

Following that meeting, the DOC supports further environmental cleaning initiatives in conjunction with our Office and Lighthouse. A meeting occurred on Friday, February 18, 2022, to “kick-off” the EIP Program. The 12-week EIP Program includes implementation and education, a terminal hospital-grade cleaning and disinfection process, and certification. Lighthouse has developed a plan to begin the process the week of March 13, 2022, and includes the DOC headquarters.

Key Components of DOC-Customized Environmental Infection Prevention Program	
Education and Training:	<p>The EIP Program will include comprehensive training for DOC staff and inmates in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proper hand hygiene; • Personal Protective Equipment (PPE); • Basic microbiology; • Infection prevention basics; and • Proper use of disinfectants, equipment, and supplies; and • Training management staff on proper monitoring of cleaning.
Cleaning and Certification:	<p>The EIP Program will also include a multi-level terminal cleaning/disinfection, inspection, and certification process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive terminal cleaning; • Assessment of air exchange and HVAC; • Blacklight inspections; • Continued monitoring of effectiveness; • Biological & COVID Re-testing (before and after cleaning); and • Certification of the facility.

MA DOC COVID-19 RESURGENCE RISK MONITORING DASHBOARD

Trends and Analysis

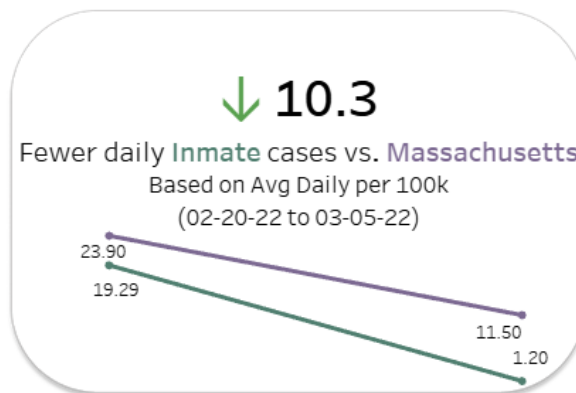
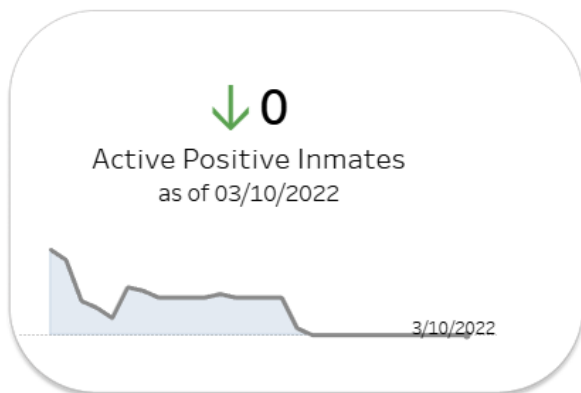
Across the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, COVID-19 infections have continued on a steep decline. The state averaged 11.5 daily cases per 100k in the latest two-week timeframe available (02-20-22 to 03-05-22). The previous two-week average was 23.9 per 100k. The Department of Correction has seen an even steeper decline across the same period. The average daily cases per 100k decreased from 19.29 to



1.2 (02-20-2022 to 03-05-2022), representing a **90% lower infection rate within DOC as compared to the community.**

Furthermore, the DOC currently has zero active positive inmates. There have been no new inmate cases in the past three weeks (last on 02-22-2022), and more than two weeks since an active inmate case.

DOC staff cases have continued to remain low in recent weeks and are below the expected case count. Based on the latest prevalence data, DOC staff were expected to have 5 active, COVID-19 positive cases. As of March 10, 2022, DOC staff accounted for 3 active, COVID-19 positive cases.



[End of Report – Attachment(s) to Follow]



ATTACHMENT A

MA DOC COVID-19 Resurgence Risk Monitoring Dashboard

Inmate Testing

Current Staff Positive Cases

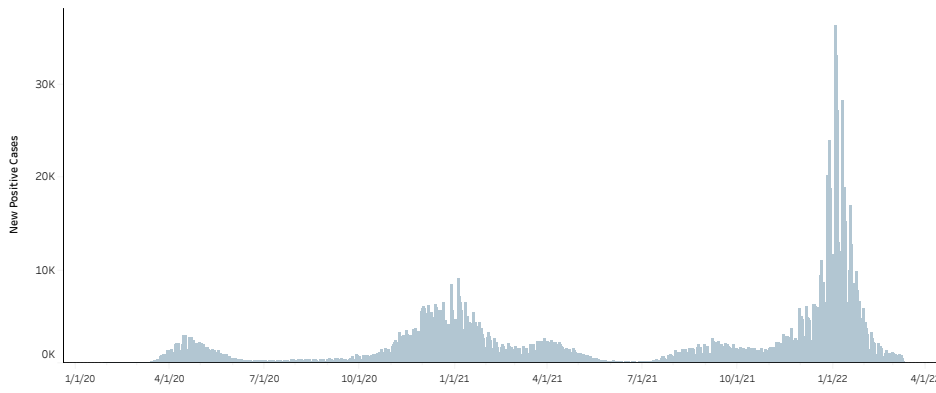
Total Tests Last Two Weeks
202

Positive Tests Last Two Weeks
0

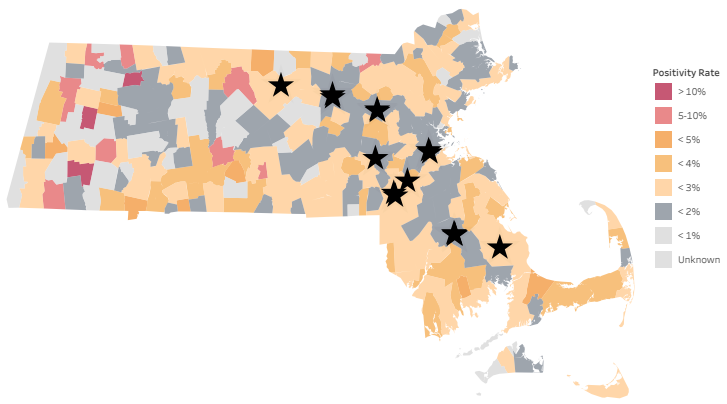
Positivity Rate Last Two Weeks
0.00%

Boston Pre-release Center	0
HQ - Milford	0
Lemuel Shattuck Hospital	0
MASAC @ Plymouth	0
Massachusetts Treatment Center	< 5
MCI Cedar Junction	0
MCI Concord	0
MCI Framingham	0
MCI Norfolk	< 5
MCI Shirley	0
North Central Correctional Center	0
Northeastern Correctional Center	0
Old Colony Correctional Center	< 5
Pondville Correctional Center	0
Souza Baranowski Correctional Center	0

New Statewide Positive COVID-19 Cases

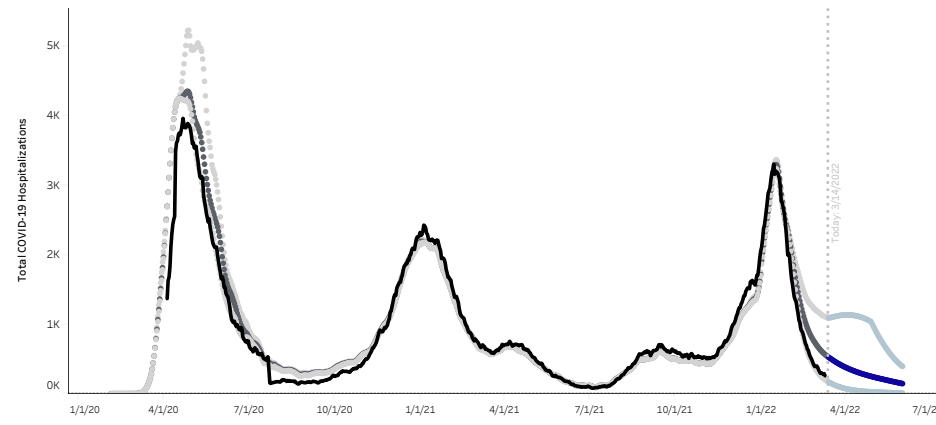


COVID-19 Positivity Rate by Municipality



Statewide COVID-19 Hospitalizations + Projection

Projection values are from the most recent IHME COVID-19 Model, <https://covid19.healthdata.org/>
 Actual Hospitalizations | Lower Projection | Mean Projection | Upper Projection



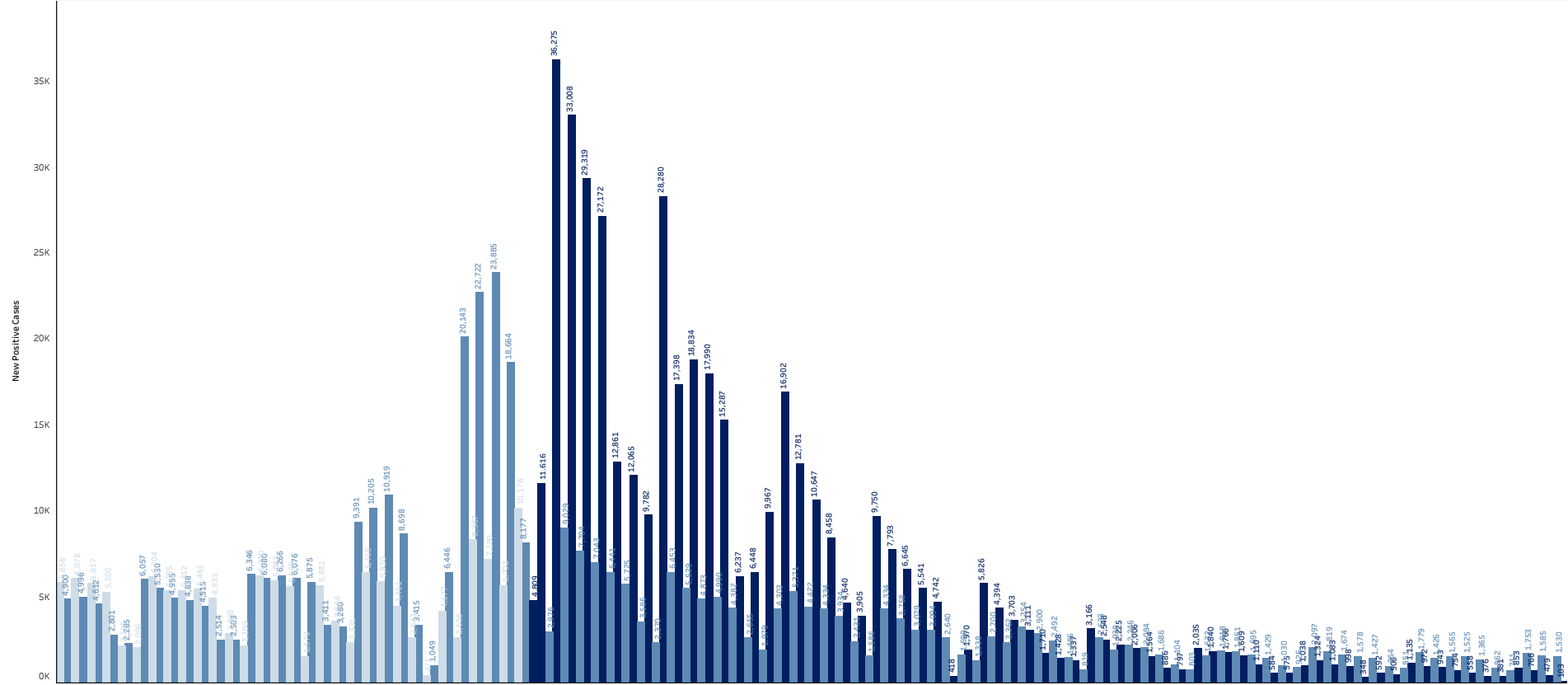
2020 | 2021 | 2022

December

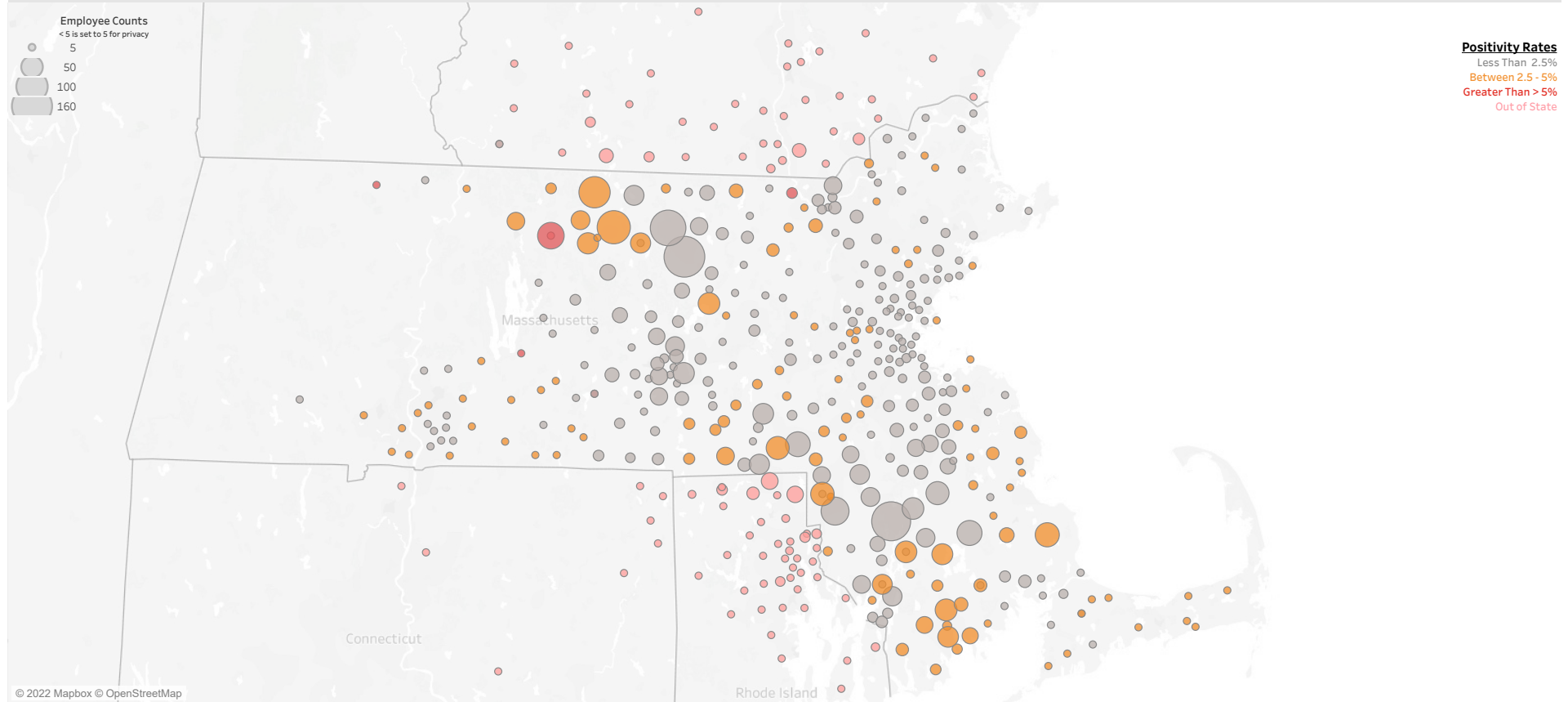
January

February

March

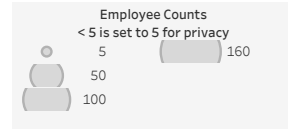
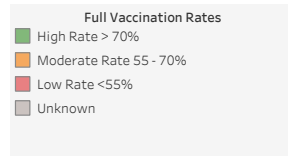
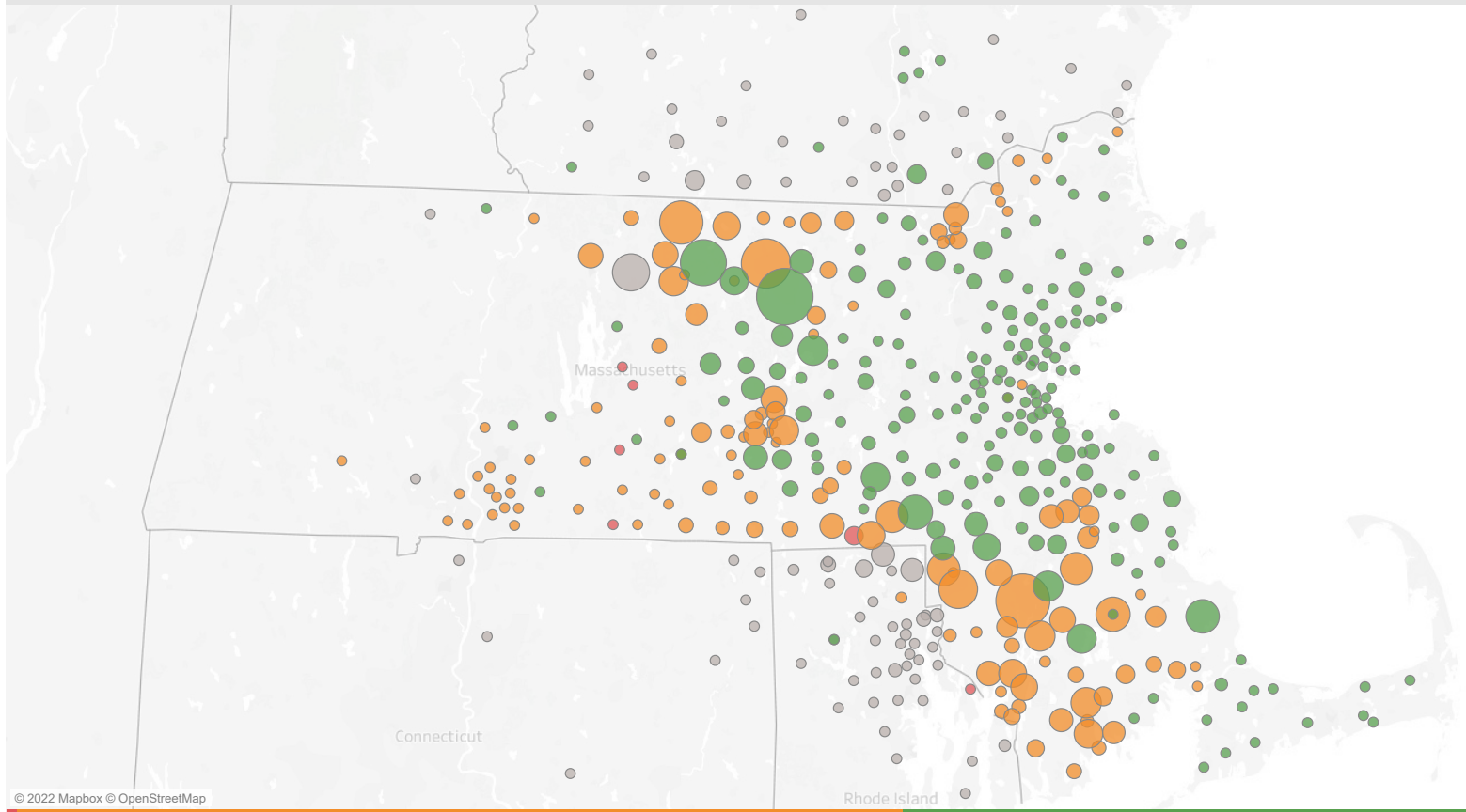


Confirmed COVID-19 case data as reported on January 26, 2021 Source: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/community-level-covid-19-data-reporting>



Reporting most recent prevalence data available. Source: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/community-level-covid-19-data-reporting>
Employee zip codes below 5 are suppressed for privacy.

Employees Living in Low COVID-19 Vaccination Rate Neighborhoods



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