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City Manager Eileen Donoghue Urges Renewed Vigilance in Adhering to COVID-19 Safety Protocols as Lowell's Transmission Risk Designation is Elevated to "Red"

According to community-level data released by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health on Wednesday, September 30, 179 new cases of COVID-19 have been identified in Lowell in the past 14 days, increasing the daily average of new cases per 100,000 residents to 10.9 for the two week period. Based on this elevated metric, Lowell has been designated as "red" or "higher risk" under the state's color-coded risk designation system for the first time since its introduction in August. Communities with a new daily case average per 100,000 residents exceeding 8.0 are classified as "red" under the system. As of Wednesday, the total number of cases in Lowell was 3,463 and the positivity rate among residents tested was 2.71 percent.

"Public health experts have long anticipated an increase in new cases of COVID-19 as we move into the fall months," said **City Manager Eileen Donoghue**. "The uptick we have experienced in Lowell over recent weeks and the City's elevation to a higher risk category is not fully unexpected, but it is certainly cause for members of the community to renew our collective adherence to public health measures that have proven effective in slowing the spread of the virus. Our ability to prevent the further acceleration of transmission in Lowell will require a concerted, communitywide effort."

"Despite the fatigue that we are all experiencing after many months of sacrifice, it remains critically important that all members of the community continue to wear face coverings and maintain a physical distance of six feet from others in public settings, stay home and seek testing if experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, and avoid large gatherings with individuals outside of their households," the City Manager continued.

"The City's Health Department is engaged in thorough contact tracing efforts to contain transmission derived from recently identified cases," said Donoghue. "A number of cases occurring during the ongoing uptick have been traced to distinct clusters, however the Department's monitoring has also indicated that transmission is taking place in all neighborhoods in the City and across all age groups, underscoring the need for heightened vigilance on the part of all residents."

“Given our designation as a ‘red’ community, the City has initiated conversations with state health authorities to consider enhanced measures that can be taken to improve the health and safety of our community, including increasing access to testing,” Donoghue concluded.

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