



TOWN OF LANCASTER

BOARD OF HEALTH

COVID-19 Update Lancaster BOH December 22, 2022

COVID-19 Status

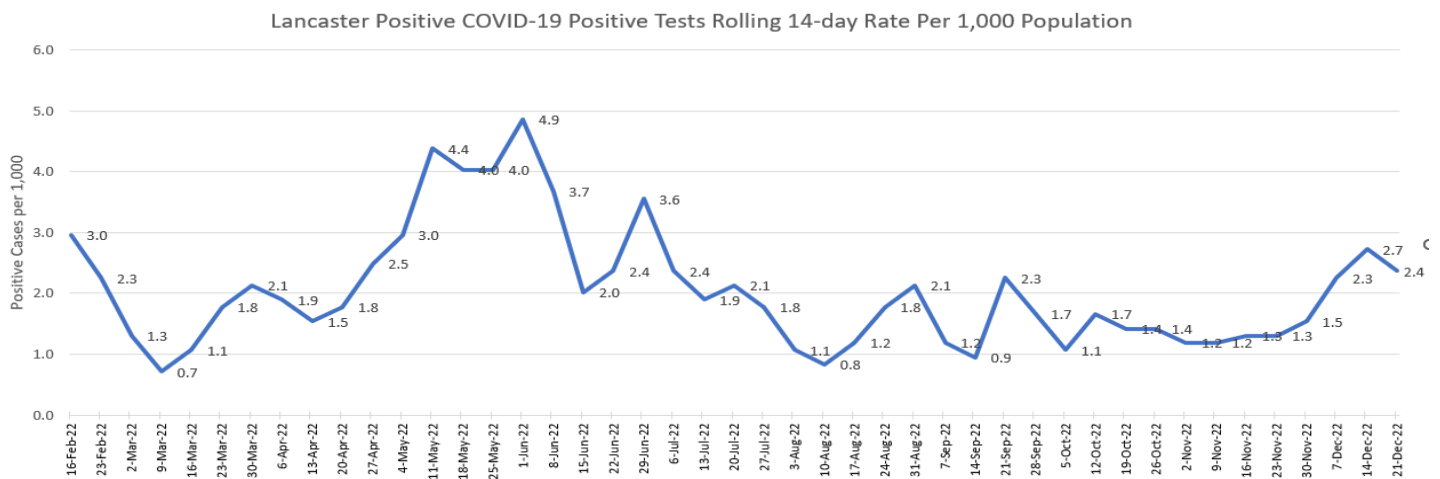
There are currently more than 66,045 cases reported in the United States per day, with test positivity of 12%. When test positivity is above 5%, transmission is considered uncontrolled. There are more than 473 deaths per day, and hospitalizations have increased 22% over the last two weeks. Since many are using home tests that are not reported through public health or are not testing at all, the official case counts underestimate the actual prevalence of COVID-19. The case rates in the Commonwealth and Lancaster have seen a steady and concerning increase over the last 5 weeks, which the BOH will continue to monitor weekly.

What COVID-19 variant are we on?

Currently, the dominant variant nationwide is BQ.1.1. Omicron BA.4, and previous variants are virtually gone now. Currently subvariants of BA.4 are circulating, including BQ.1.1, BQ.1, BA.5, BF.7 and XBB. These variants are similar to omicron, in that they are highly contagious but not extremely virulent.

Protection from COVID-19

- Get vaccinated, and boosted
- Wear a mask in public places especially indoors
- Choose outdoor activities over indoor activities whenever possible
- Wash your hands often
- Avoid close contact with others
- Stay home if you're sick or have symptoms of COVID-19



COVID-19 Test Kits and PPE

COVID-19 rapid antigen test kits are available free of charge to any Lancaster resident or town employee. The kits are for self-testing at home. The BOH is holding a number of kits in reserve.

The kits are available at the following distribution centers:

1. Community Center/COA: Mon - Fri 8:00 am - 11:00 am
2. Thayer Memorial Library: Thu 1:00 pm – 7:00 pm, Sat 10:00 am – 1:00 pm
3. Police Department - Mon - Fri 8:00 am - 2:00 pm
4. Fire Department – Wed 4:00 pm – 8:00 pm, Sat 9:00 am – 12:00 pm

In addition, free at-home rapid antigen COVID-19 test kits can be ordered at <https://www.covidtests.gov/> There is a limit of 4 per household.

Expiration Dates: The iHealth kits circulating in Lancaster have various lot numbers which may indicate a variety of expiration dates. Please note the expiration dates have been extended beyond the date printed on the box, until at least **June 2023**, per the FDA. Further extensions are possible and will be posted at ihealthlabs.com/pages/news. In addition to test kit boxes, we have received stickers that should be placed on each test box so recipients can check the extended expiration date for each test, as well as information about what to do if they test positive. If you need a sticker contact the Lancaster BOH at (978) 365-3326 ext. 1086.

There are no restrictions or requirements for the use of these at-home tests. The tests can be completed by residents at home. Test results are available in 15 minutes and samples do not need to go to a laboratory. People do not need a cell phone or computer for any part of the test. The tests are for any individual, regardless of vaccination status or whether they have symptoms. Test results do not need to be reported to the Department of Public Health or the BOH unless administered by a staff member at a facility.

Last week the MDPH sent offers to local boards of health for receiving free COVID-19 test kits and PPE. The Lancaster BOH has over 3,000 test kits in stock and will not be ordering any additional. We have 900 KN-95 face masks and have ordered 1,000 more, as well as quantities of children's masks, and gloves.

Please contact jeffLBOHpaster@gmail.com if you have any questions.