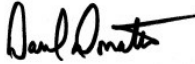




## Town of Palm Beach Fire-Rescue



TO: Kirk Blouin, Town Manager

FROM: Darrel Donatto, Fire Rescue Chief 

SUBJECT: February 2022 Update on COVID-19 pandemic

DATE: February 7, 2022

We continue to see rapid declines in the number of new COVID-19 cases here in Palm Beach County and across Florida.

### Daily infections and testing

Reported cases are the number of people reported to be infected with COVID-19 each day.

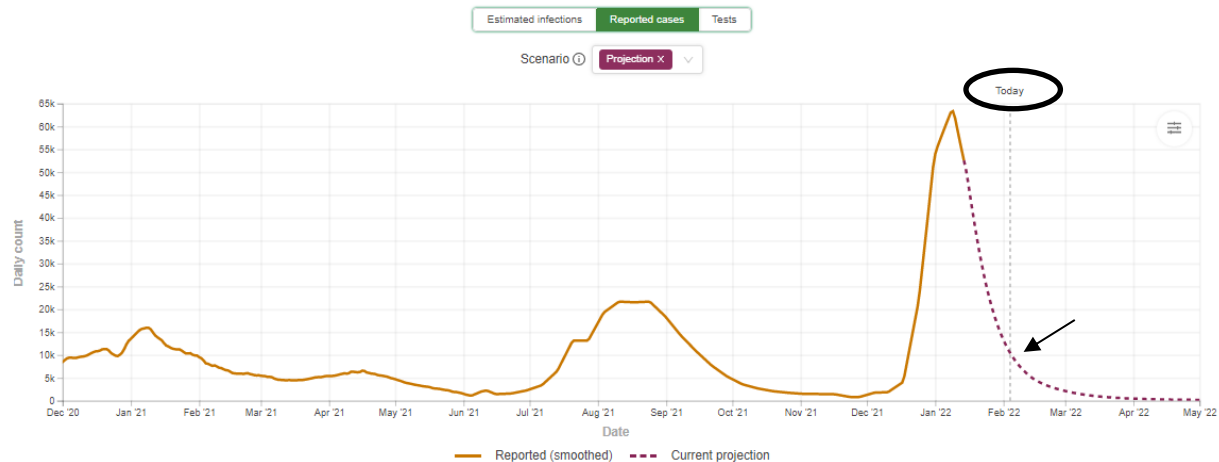


Figure 1 - Data from <https://covid19.healthdata.org/united-states-of-america/florida?view=infections-testing&tab=trend&test=infections>

The percentage of positivity here in Palm Beach County has dropped from 19.7% for the week ending of January 28 to 15.1% for week ending February 4, which is the latest data available.

We are past the peak of COVID cases in this wave and, absent a new variant that evades acquired immunity, we will continue to see steady declines in the number of new cases.

As stated in prior months' reports, scientists predict that SARS-CoV-2 is here to stay for a prolonged time. Future variants will develop because that's what viruses do: They mutate when they replicate. The World Health Organization said there are four Omicron variant subvariants it is watching right now.

Over time, the population is developing more and more immunity, either through vaccination or exposure. But there are still a lot of unknowns. How long any acquired immunity lasts or whether or not that immunity will help with future variants remains unknown. Likewise, how deadly or how contagious those future variants, or even subvariants, will be is unknown.

As COVID cases decline, we should begin transitioning to the endemic phase of the disease, where we must learn how to live with it long term.

The key to living with SARS-CoV-2 is the same approach used with other endemic diseases such as the flu. People will need to get vaccinated, public health officials will need sound surveillance systems, and people will need to take additional protective actions when outbreaks occur. Testing will also play a role in helping keep the sick apart from the vulnerable. Like with other airborne diseases, people who have symptoms of COVID-19 should immediately isolate themselves and get tested to protect others from the spread of the disease. These steps are all of the things we are currently doing to keep each other safe while the fight with Covid continues. The difference will be that they will become the norm and not an ongoing response to a crisis.