



May 20, 2020

Dear Residents of Birch Hill, RiverWoods Exeter and RiverWoods Durham,

As you may know, the state has instituted a program to test all Health Care residents for COVID-19. They will initially test all, and then will test a sample of residents (about 10% at a time) of nursing homes on a rotating basis. This will give them data on outbreaks and asymptomatic positive (or presymptomatic) cases for the most vulnerable population. In addition, the state will test health care staff every 7-10 days; also good news.

This health care resident state testing was done at RiverWoods Exeter late last week and all residents again tested negative. That is great news. You will recall that we tested all Health Care residents of our own accord in mid-April, and all residents in the RWE Health Care setting were negative at that time also.

We expect that the health care resident testing for the Birch Hill Health Care setting will be done today or tomorrow as soon as we receive the test kits from the State. We anticipate results from this testing in about 48-72 hours once the testing is completed and will update you on the results once they have been received.

It is our expectation that we will have more Birch Hill health care residents test positive in this round of testing. We continue to track any symptoms at least three times per day and now it appears the "symptom set" can be anything from diarrhea, vomiting, fever, cough, shortness of breath, lethargy, rash... basically anything that you might see in a person who is declining in any way. So, we continue to track, monitor, and isolate as well as possible. As we have said before, because of how easily the virus spreads, it is very difficult to get rid of once it gets in.

Through two rounds of testing that started in mid-April we have had 20 residents in the Birch Hill health center test positive for COVID-19. Of those, seven have passed away and 10 have "recovered" (recovered meaning that they have either been cleared by the Department of Public Health or have had no change in symptoms in > 14 days), and three are newly positive based on hospital stay/testing.

With the global shortage of PPE we have been working very hard to procure enough isolation gowns to meet our needs. We have now been able to procure appropriate PPE not only for Birch Hill, but enough that we would be covered if we were to have an outbreak at RW Exeter or RW Durham. That is good news, and we continue to source and procure PPE so we maintain a healthy supply for all communities

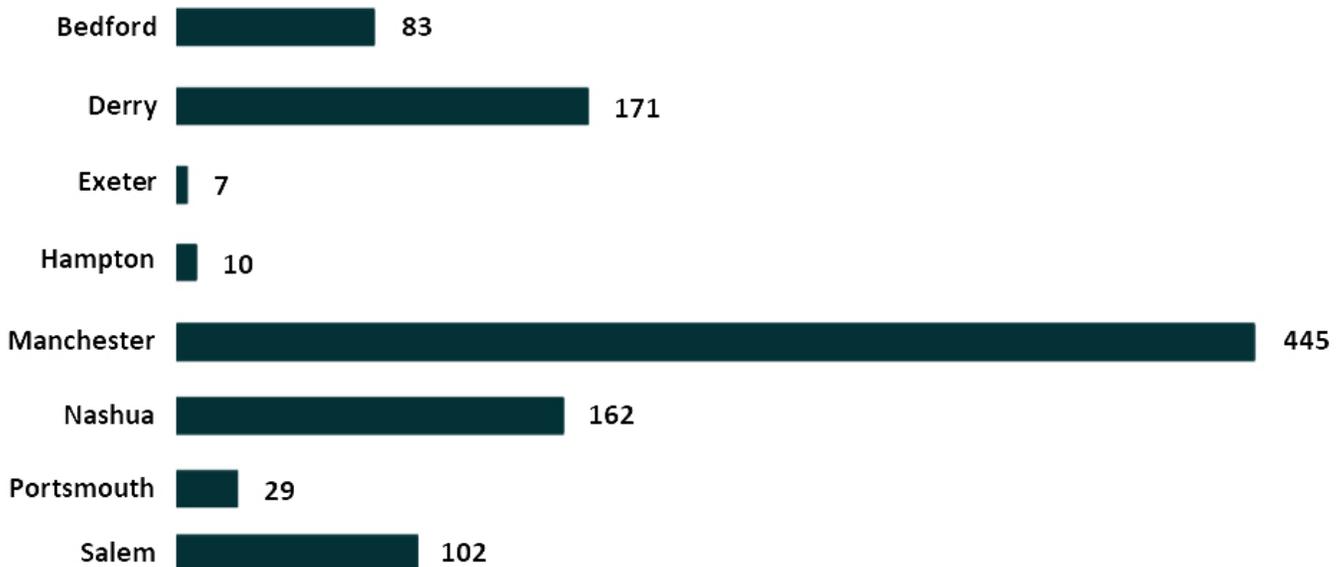
We also continue to test our staff on an ongoing basis. In addition to our daily screening, which includes a temperature check as well as various symptom and personal questions, we aggressively send any staff with any noted symptom for testing.

In total across the system (and excluding the time when we tested all staff – which was more than 800 people) we have tested 89 staff members for “symptoms.” At RW Exeter and RW Durham, all staff who have been tested have been negative. At Birch Hill we have had 22 of staff test positive. Some have been asymptomatic and have shown up in our random testing, some have been tested due to symptoms they experienced, and some have been tested due to their living arrangements (spouse or partner exposed or positive).

Approximately 90% of our Birch Hill staff live in Manchester and that is the current hotspot in New Hampshire. Additionally, the exposure to COVID-19 positive cases is still the highest risk for infection, and our Birch Hill nursing staff live that every day. Even with proper PPE and proper infection prevention methods it is an incredible challenge. Though 22 of our staff have tested positive, all have recovered or are recovering. This is a number that changes on a regular basis, as we are aggressively testing our staff to try to weed out any spread from staff who are positive. You can see the relative number of cases in the chart below, and the challenge that exists in Manchester, from NH Public Radio.

COVID-19 Cases By Community

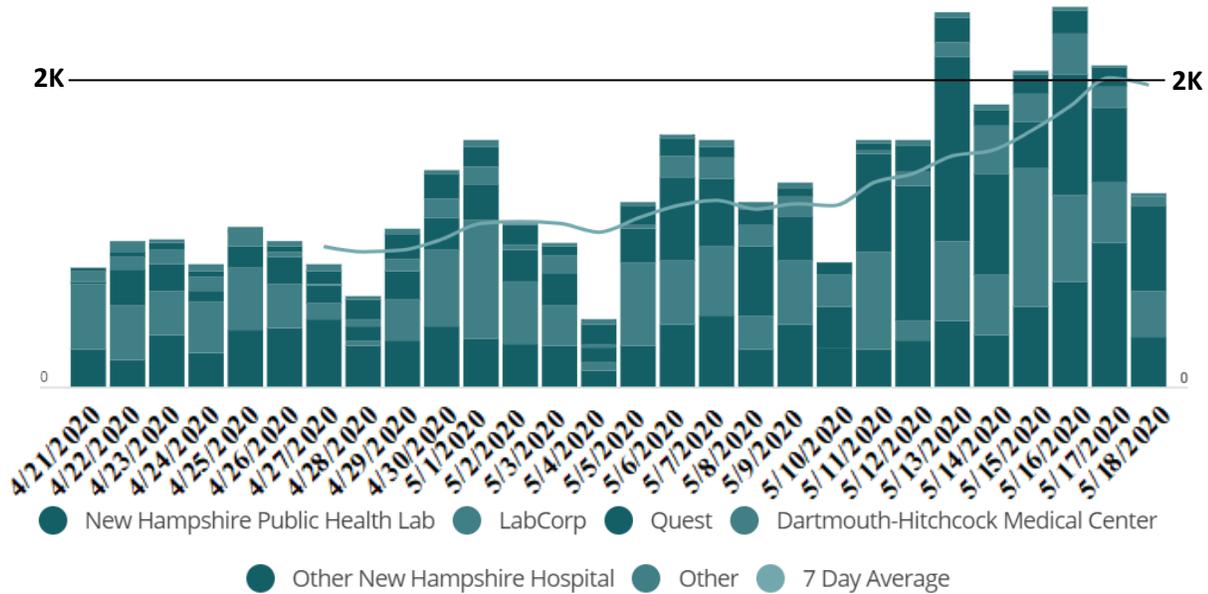
Active Cases



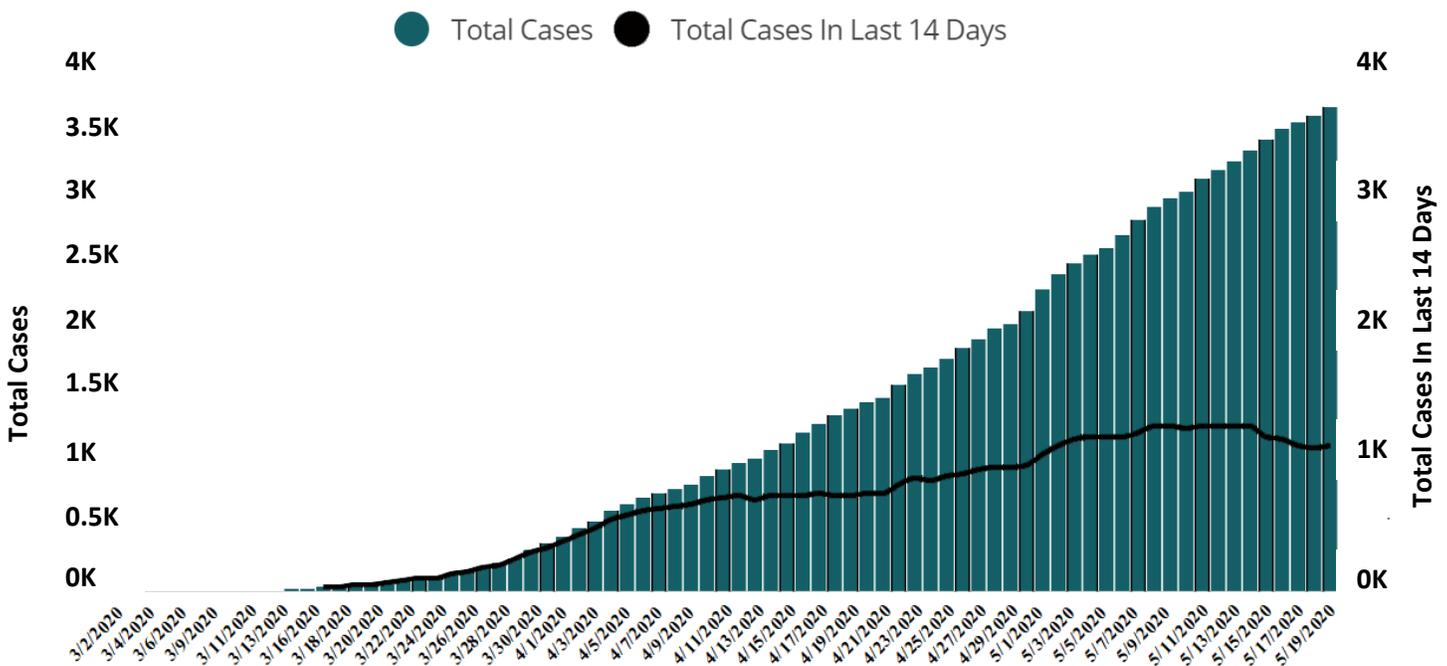
Source: New Hampshire COVID-19 Data Reports, COVIDTracking.com, Census Data

New Hampshire has really ramped up its testing and that is a good thing. As you can see in the chart below, daily testing is now averaging above 2,000 tests. That gives better information. And while the number of cases in New Hampshire continues to increase, the 14-day average of new cases has been fairly constant.

How Much Is N.H. Testing?



How Many Have Been Identified So Far?



The state is doing ok (not great, but ok), so that is good news. However, nursing homes continue to be the trouble areas. We are living that experience with Birch Hill.

We continue to work to get this challenge at the Birch Hill health center under control. The staff and leaders there are my true heroes. They are working tirelessly to serve their residents safely and to do all they can to keep themselves and their teammates safe and healthy. As the state continues to open up, and as we consider changes to *our* guidelines for independent residents, we use all that we are learning from this challenge to help us make reasonable, but conservative decisions. You will hear more from us at the end of the week around those future adjustments.

The takeaways for me right now, are these:

- More testing is happening and that is great news – knowing is better than not knowing.
- In Exeter and Durham we have geography (and a little good luck) on our side. In Manchester geography and density of population is working against us.
- Proper PPE will help, and we are now comfortable that we have the best PPE available to keep our staff safe. This isn't a magic elixir, but it will help.
- We are in this for a while – the virus isn't going away until a treatment or a vaccine are found.
- Manchester is the New Hampshire hot spot. We want to ensure we don't become a "hot spot" on the Seacoast. Opening up is a risk, and we will do our best to balance your desire for freedom with an overall desire for conservatism.

Thank you for your patience; this is a wily virus and these are challenging times, but they are only a moment in time. We will get through this. We are smart and committed, and if we stay that way science will catch up. We have an easier time of it in Exeter and Durham **for now**, but we need to be vigilant as the state opens and we attract more visitors to the seacoast in the coming months. We will continue to do everything we can to keep the virus out of RW Exeter and RW Durham, and to do everything we can to contain and eliminate it in the Birch Hill health center. That is our commitment to you and to one another.

Every day I read about new developments in testing, anti-virals, and vaccine progress. We're making forward progress, and these are positive steps... Science will catch up. Until then, stay healthy my friends.



Justine Vogel
TRWG CEO