



A lone car lines up for COVID-19 testing on March 9 at the Stop the Spread site at Holyoke Community College. The last day of testing at HCC will be March 31. (SUBMITTED / HCC)

Holyoke COVID-19 testing site planning to close at end of month

HOLYOKE — Due to a rapid decline in infection rates and dwindling demand for COVID-19 tests, the Stop the Spread testing program at Holyoke Community College will conclude at the end of the month. Thursday, March 31, will be the final day of testing at HCC.

HCC has served as a site for the no-cost drive-through testing program since it was instituted by the state in the summer of 2020.

Last week, Gov. Charlie Baker's administration announced that it will be winding down the public PCR testing program, with 30 of the 41 sites in Massachusetts scheduled to close at the end of March.

According to the Baker administration, testing sites have seen an 80% decrease in demand since the beginning of January, when the omicron variant of COVID-19 was at its peak, also noting that at-home rapid antigen tests are now widely available either for free or through insurance reimbursement.

PCR testing will still be available locally after March at the Holyoke Mall, in Easthampton, in Springfield, and at other sites around the state. To find a testing site, visit www.mass.gov/info-details/find-a-covid-19-test.

Until April 1, drive-through COVID-19 testing at HCC will continue six days a week in Parking Lot M by the Bartley Center for Athletics and Recreation on HCC's main campus at 303 Homestead Ave., Holyoke.

The HCC testing site is open Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday from 7 a.m. to 11 a.m.; and Tuesday and Thursday 2-7 p.m. Testing remains free to all Massachusetts residents on a first-come basis. No appointments and no referrals are necessary.

Testing may sometimes be canceled due to inclement weather. For up-to-date information on cancellations, visit the Holyoke Board of Health website at www.holyoke.org/departments/board-of-health.