Acushnet Fire chief: "Acushnet, we have a problem!"

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"The image below is a screenshot of the August 5th state report which showed Acushnet as having 103 positive Covid cases by that date. My kids consider March 13th as the official date Covid began as that was their last day of "real" school. Using those dates as bookends, we had 103 cases in the first 145 days of this crisis.

Massachusetts Department of Public Health COVID-19 Dashboard – Wednesday, August 5, 2020

Count and Rate (per 100,000) of Confirmed COVID-19 Cases and Tests Performed[1] in MA by City/Town, January 1, 2020 – August 5, 2020

City/Town	Total Case Count	Case Count (Last 14 Days)	Percent Change[2]	Total Tests	Total Tests (Last 14 days)	Total Positive Tests (Last 14 days)	Percent Positivity (Last 14 days)
Abington	248	6	No Change	3264	349	6	1.72%
Acton	174	<5	No Change	4182	667	4	0.60%
Acushnet	103	<5	Decrease	1746	212	4	1.89%
Adams	35	0	No Change	1147	208	0	0%
Agawam	506	19	Decrease	6865	1034	25	2.42%

Acushnet Fire & EMS photo.

"Today, Joe Correia, the Acushnet Health Agent, informed me that Acushnet has had 206 cases reported in December alone! We have doubled in 22 days what it took 145 days at the beginning of the pandemic to achieve.

"Acushnet, we have a real problem.

"Let's put aside the distracting questions that always arise from reports like this; how sick are they, how many deaths, how many double counted results. That is noise. The harsh reality is that Thanksgiving beat us up and if we are not smart Christmas and New Year's will do the same. Consider the level of testing we offered in October (63 reported cases) and

November (123 reported cases). The amount of testing has been consistent but the current caseload has exploded!

"The 206 December cases were not all tested by the town. Many people go to their doctors for testing if they are not feeling well. Others seek out out other testing opportunities. What I do know, because I speak with the positive residents who we do test, is many are surprised by the news. They thought they just had a cold, a sinus infection or allergies. This means they were shedding the virus unknowingly for a period of time before the test. Community testing caught it and allowed them to do the right thing.

"Our local hospitals are stressed. Talk to any of the Acushnet residents who work at Tobey, St. Luke's, St. Anne's or Charlton. Talk with any of our EMS staff who bring patients of all illnesses and injuries to emergency rooms that are chock full. Thanksgiving beat us up and if we are not smart Christmas and New Year's will do the same.

"The return to normal we all seek is shoved backward by these numbers. The return to normal we all seek will be shoved back even further if we do not learn from Thanksgiving and do the right thing this week and next.

"I apologize for what may seem like a rant. It really is simple frustration that good people are getting hurt – from those who are ill to those who are out of work, from those who live with constant anxiety to kids who remember their last day of real school – by a relentless virus.

"Please come get tested tomorrow, Acushnet! Find out your status and then do the right thing whether your positive or negative.
"Please." -.Kevin Gallagher