

Boston to require vaccination proof starting in January

By KATIE LANNAN
State House News Service

Patrons and staff at indoor spaces in Boston – including restaurants, bars, nightclubs, fitness facilities and entertainment venues – will need to show proof they are vaccinated against COVID-19 starting next month, under a policy Mayor Michelle Wu announced Monday that marks a major shift

from current practice in the city. Wu, who also tightened the vaccine policy for city employees, was joined for her announcement by municipal officials from Salem, Somerville and Brookline. Wu's office said those communities, along with Arlington and Cambridge, are also working to advance their own vaccine requirements.

“This region requires Boston to take major steps and for us all to work together as a community amongst communities,” Brookline Select Board member Raul Fernandez said. Wu's announcement comes five days after the Boston Public Health Commission announced the city's first confirmed cases of the omicron variant of COVID-19 in three young adults over the

age of 18 who were not vaccinated and experienced mild disease without needing to be

hospitalized.

“This step will help increase our vaccination numbers, which we know is the best way to keep our community safe and thriving,” Wu said.

BUDGET

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opportunity to share their ideas,” Lawlor said.

Some ideas like equipping the town's parks with WiFi were already planned, Lawlor said.

The requests were also important feedback for other ideas already in the works, he added, including one request for a splash pad, which is in the plans for the Town Yard redevelopment.

The committee had its first meeting and is currently focusing on evaluating the cost to determine the feasibility of these projects and deciding if we can use existing departmental funds

“The committee is also looking at what benefits the most amount of people because

they want these dollars to do the most they can, so they are coming up with an evaluation tool to score these projects based on how many people will benefit from the actual projects,” Lawlor said.

“We are really excited about this, some projects would cost \$150 to millions of dollars. That's why it's great we have an inter-departmental committee to help determine the costs and score the potential use,” Lawlor said.

The projects are to be chosen by the committee in February and implemented in the spring, Lawlor said. The town also plans to set aside \$30,000 in the upcoming budget for resident-requested projects, he added.

“We've added a lot of engagement opportunities in the budget process from

expanding committees to having the participatory capital budget projects, and it's exciting to see how people get involved,” Lawlor said.

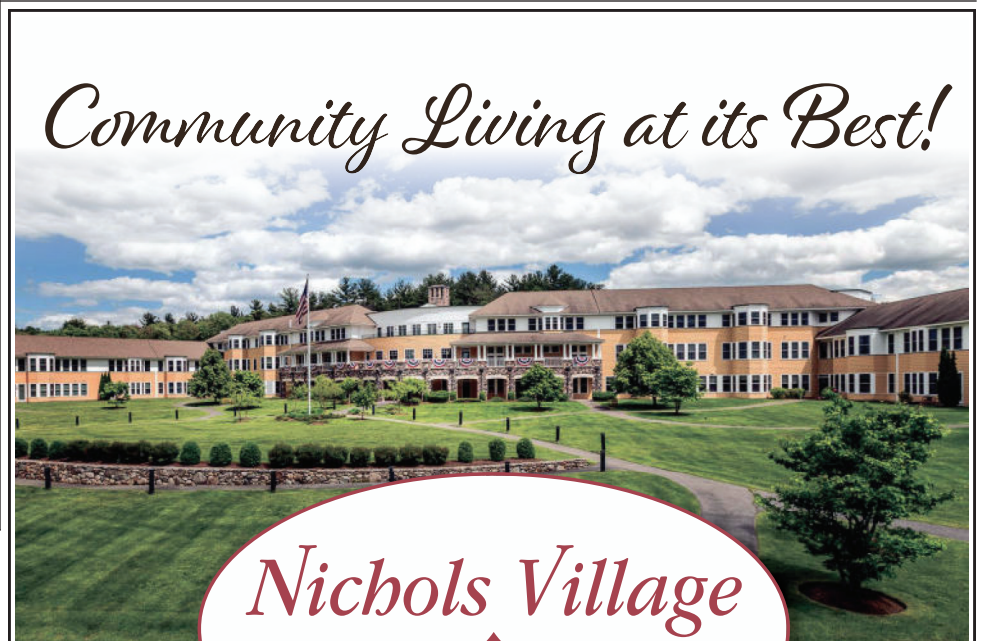
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COVID

Continued from Page A1

use of monoclonal antibody treatment can help patients avoid potentially preventable admissions and keep our healthcare system in the best possible position to provide world class care," she wrote.

Delivered by injection, antibodies are laboratory-made versions of human proteins that help boost the immune system to fight off viruses and other infections.

If administered within the first 10 days from the outset of an infection, health experts say the one-time therapy is highly effective in neutralizing the virus, preventing symptoms from worsening and avoiding hospitalization.

Cooke said health care providers have ample supplies of the antibodies and the state has expanded capacity by dispatching mobile units. There is no cost to the patient and health insurance is not required to receive the treatments, she said.

To be eligible for monoclonal therapy, patients must be 12 or older and have a positive COVID-19 test. They must also have preexisting conditions that put them at high risk for severe disease, such as chronic lung and cardiovascular diseases, obesity or diabetes, according to the DPH's guidance to providers.

The state has created a searchable map showing locations where the

monoclonal antibody treatments are available.

The treatments are being offered at Salem Hospital, North Shore Physicians Urgent Care Group in Danvers and Pentucket Medical Associates in Lawrence.

Hospitals have been sounding alarms in recent weeks as a flood of largely unvaccinated COVID-19 patients have pushed emergency rooms to their capacity.

But the emergence of the new highly contagious omicron variant has sparked concerns about a possible shortage of monoclonal antibody therapies.

Drugmakers Regeneron and Eli Lilly recently warned that laboratory testing suggests their monoclonal antibody therapies will be much less potent against omicron, which contains dozens of mutations that make it harder for antibodies to attack the virus. That means those two therapies could be sidelined.

A third antibody drug from GlaxoSmithKline has shown

promise against omicron in recent studies, but the drug is not widely available in the U.S.

Meanwhile, two antiviral pills that have shown promising results in treating

COVID-19 patients are being reviewed by federal health officials for authorization.

Pfizer has applied for approval from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for its Paxlovid pill, and drug

manufacturer Merck asked the FDA to grant emergency authorization for its COVID

pill, called molnupiravir. Both drugs would be prescription based and could be taken at home, unlike antibody

therapies.

Still, another potential treatment for COVID-19 that showed promise at the outset of the pandemic is being largely discouraged by medical experts.

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FURTHER REVIEW



THE MANY FACES OF SANTA CLAUS

TYLER TJOMSLAND/THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW

By Charles Apple | THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW

You know Dasher and Dancer and Prancer and Vixen — as well as the jolly ol' guy they drag around every Christmas Eve: Santa Claus, or Kris Kringle.

The bearded one may be a familiar staple here in the U.S., but would you recognize him the way he's known in other countries?

<p>TURKEY Saint Nicholas</p> <p>WIKIMEDIA COMMONS</p>	<p>The legend of Santa Claus, Father Christmas and most of the others you see here originated with the story of Saint Nicholas of Myra, an early Christian monk-turned-bishop who was originally born in Greece in 280 A.D. He spent much of his life in what is now Demre, Turkey, becoming known for his kindness and generosity.</p>	<p>Nicholas is the patron saint of children, sailors, merchants, students and various others. The anniversary of Nicholas' death — Dec. 6 — was observed with a feast and festival of gift-giving.</p>	<p>Dutch immigrants brought stories of "Sinterklaas" with them to America in the 1770s. By the early 1800s, Washington Irving had written about Nicholas as the patron saint of New York. But Nicholas' journey from fact to legend became complete with the 1822 publication of Clement Moore's poem "A Visit from Saint Nicholas."</p>
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NETHERLANDS
Sinterklaas

Of all the Christmas figures you see here, it's Sinterklaas who most closely resembles the man who inspired the legends. Sinterklaas rides from town to town atop a white horse, wearing a tall bishop's hat and carrying a jeweled staff. He knocks on doors to deliver gifts to good children. The dark side of the legend: Sinterklaas' counterpart, Grampus, rattles chains at naughty children and threatens to kidnap them.



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GREAT BRITAIN
Father Christmas

The British have revered Father Christmas since the 15th Century, also calling him Sir Christmas and Captain Christmas. He was depicted as an old man who showed up at feasts and parties — closely resembling the Ghost of Christmas Present in Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol." He wasn't known for giving gifts to children until the U.S. tradition of Santa Claus bounced back to the U.K.



WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

FRANCE
Père Noël

Père Noël — whose name translates literally into "Father Christmas" — wears a robe, carries a wicker basket and wanders the French countryside atop his faithful donkey, Gui — which translates into "Mistletoe." Children place carrots and other vegetables into their shoes and leave them out for Gui. Père Noël replaces Gui's snacks with presents. Père Noël whips those on his naughty list, some say.



WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

RUSSIA, UKRAINE
Ded Moroz and Snegurochka

Ded Moroz ("Father Frost") was a mythological Slavic character usually portrayed as a wizard or a demon. He punished naughty children by kidnapping them. Over time, that legend was replaced by a new one in which Ded Moroz travels the region on New Year's Eve with his cheerful companion, Snegurochka, the Snow Maiden, delivering gifts to good children.



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SPAIN
Los Reyes Magos

In Spain, children are visited by not just one, but three old men — Melchor, Gaspar and Baltasar — Los Reyes Magos, who visit on Jan. 6. That day, El Día De Reyes, is known as the epiphany: The day the three wise men finally reached the manger where baby Jesus was staying. The Reyes Magos bring presents to good children, who leave sweets for the visitors and hay for the camels on which they ride.



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AUSTRIA, GERMANY, CZECH REP.
Christkindl

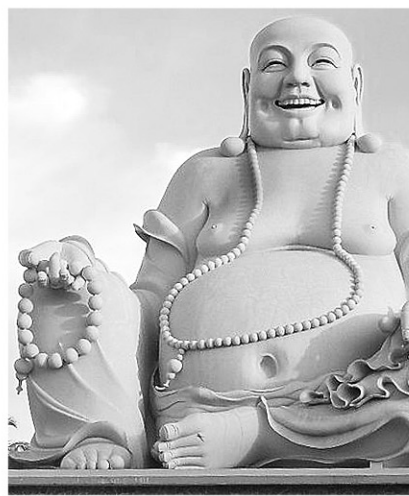
Christkindl — or "Christ Child" — leaves presents for good Lutheran children in Germany, Austria, the Czech Republic and the Slovakian region of Europe. She's female, with curly blonde hair and wears a crown — her appearance and persona are said to come from the baby Jesus himself, as opposed to another mythological being who spreads Christmas presents and good cheer on Christmas Eve.



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FINLAND, SWEDEN
Jultomten

Jultomten — also known as Tomte — is a dwarf-like man resembling a garden gnome who guards farmhouses against bad luck. Once upon a time, Jultomten was associated with Satan but, over time, his legend has become crossed with that of Father Christmas. At Christmas, a family member will dress up as Jultomten — including a face mask — and give out presents to good children.



WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

JAPAN
Hotei

Very few residents of the Japanese islands are Christians, so their version of the jolly ol' man involves a completely different jolly ol' man: Hotei, a Zen Buddhist monk who lived in the 10th century. Don't confuse him with Buddha himself, despite their similar looks. Hotei is one of seven gods of luck and carries a magical linen bag full of gifts for the poor and needy and candy for kids on New Year's Eve.

Sources: Insider.com, Muza-chan's Gate to Japan, EatTheGlobe.com, Dictionary.com, "The Story of Santa" by Life magazine, "Extraordinary Origins of Everyday Things" by Charles Panati

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Ballot initiative seeks to reduce dental costs

By CHRISTIAN M. WADE
 Statehouse Reporter

BOSTON — A proposal inching toward the 2022 ballot seeks to contain dental costs by setting new requirements on private insurance companies. The ballot question, if approved, would require insurance companies to spend at least 83% of their revenues on “dental expenses and quality improvements as opposed to administrative expenses.” Backers say the move would put dental insurance in line with the requirements for medical insurers.

The measure’s primary backer, Mouhab Rizkallah, an orthodontist and chairman of the Committee on Dental Insurance Quality, said the proposal is aimed at breaking up on a

“monopoly” in the dental insurance industry.

“This law will allow patients to get the treatments the patients want, in consult with their doctors, instead of inferior treatments that insurance companies want to cover,” he said in a statement. “This law would create fair dental insurance value and patient autonomy from insurance pressures.”

Rizkallah describes the effort as a David vs. Goliath battle, and expects a well-funded opposition campaign by the industry.

“Dental insurance company CEO’s and corporate officers are amongst the highest paid in the nation, and disguise their companies as ‘not for profit,’” he said. “So we expect serious opposition as we shift billions of dollars from corporate yachts to patient needs.”

A spokesperson for the Massachusetts Association of Health Plans didn’t immediately respond to a request for comment.

The Massachusetts Dental Society, which isn’t directly involved in the ballot initiative, also supports so-called medical loss ratio reform and is urging lawmakers to approve a similar bill pending in the state Legislature.

In a statement, the society said the changes “will protect dental patients by bringing the same transparency and accountability to dental plans that already exist for medical plans.”

“The bill would hold dental benefits companies to the same standards as health insurers, requiring them to spend 80% of premium dollars on serving patients, rather than padding their bottom lines,” the group said.

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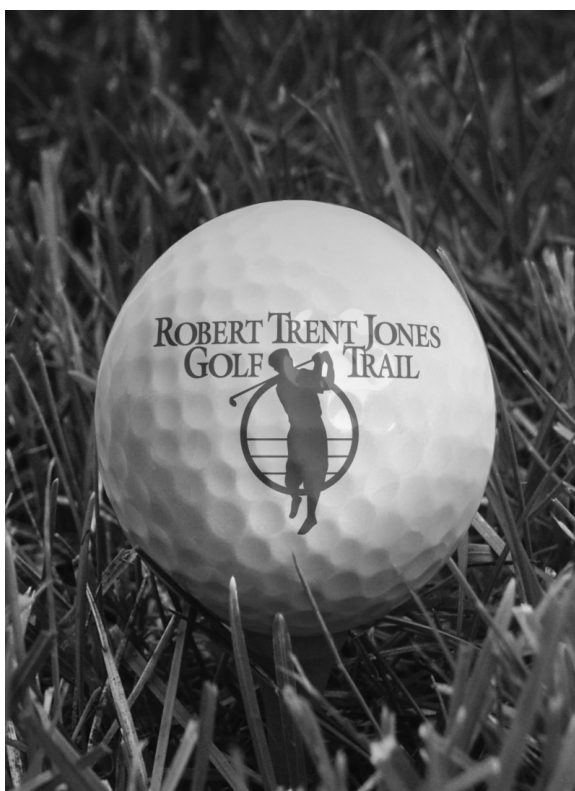
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What's old is new at Bradstreet school

BY WILL BROADDUS
Staff Writer

NORTH ANDOVER — A new sign for the Anne Bradstreet Early Childhood Center in North Andover is also a monument to the school's history.

Completed last month, the sign is a standalone wall built from bricks, which incorporates five stone blocks that are engraved with the name "Bradstreet School."

These blocks originally appeared in a 1948 addition to the school when it stood at 70 Main St., where it was constructed in 1911.

"They were on the rear of the building, about 50 feet in the air," said Stan Limpert, a member of the North Andover Historical Society, which created the sign using Community Preservation Act funds. "They weren't anywhere close to where you could easily view them. I have no idea what they were thinking when they did that."

When that building was

torn down in 2015, the Historical Society kept the stones until they could be installed at the new school, which opened in 2019.

"They were stored at the middle school for a number of years, and the monument was finally built this year, so it's taken a while to get this accomplished," Limpert said.

But while the school has always been named "Bradstreet," the person to whom the sign refers was changed when the new school opened.

"People incorrectly assumed that the original school was named for Anne Bradstreet," Limpert said. "They didn't realize it was named for her husband. That was a commonly held mistake by folks in town."

A plaque on the new monument explains that Anne Bradstreet, America's first poet, was born Anne Dudley in England in 1612. She married Simon Bradstreet, who eventually became governor of Massachusetts, when she was 16. The couple came to



TIM JEAN/Staff photo

Stan Limpert, a member of North Andover Historical Society stands next to the Bradstreet School sign outside the Anne Bradstreet Early Childhood Center that incorporates elements from old school on Main Street. The sign now has plaques that describe the school's history, and discuss Anne Bradstreet, for whom the school is named.

America in 1630.

Naming the new school for Anne followed "community outreach," Limpert said, and certainly seems appropriate. Bradstreet was not only a gifted poet and an educational prodigy, but also a parent of eight children.

The plaque features a quotation from one of her prose "Meditations," moral reflections that were written "as a legacy for her children and the generations to come," according to the biography "Mistress Bradstreet" by Charlotte Gordon of Endicott College.

"If we had no winter, the spring would not be so pleasant," Bradstreet wrote. "If we did not sometimes taste of adversity, prosperity would not be so welcome."

The school name is followed on the sign by a row of blocks engraved with the years 1885, 1911, 1948 and 2019. The first three blocks were also rescued from the 1948 addition, and refer to the dates when the first Bradstreet School was built from wood on Saunders Street, followed by the brick building on Main Street and its addition.

The last year, 2019, refers to the new school's completion date, and appears on a block that was created specifically for the monument.

There is also a second plaque, which describes the school's history and explains how the first two buildings served different purposes over time, until they were obsolete, dangerous or both.

Diane Huster, president of the North Andover Historical

Society, pointed out that along with educating children, the Bradstreet School on Main Street played an important role in uniting the town.

"In the mid '80s we turned it into an early childhood center where all the kindergartens went," she said. "It had a real social impact that we hadn't expected. Every kindergarten parent got to meet kindergarten parents from all over town, and they forged friendships and then reunited in the sixth grade when they went to middle school."

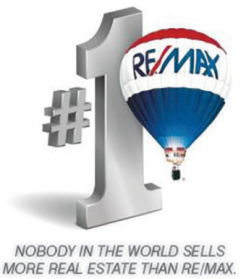
Today's Anne Bradstreet Early Childhood Center, where all the town's nursery and kindergarten students go to school, revives this tradition.

"You now have that same dynamic, where everybody meets everybody," Huster said. "It's their first experience in going to school. It fosters a togetherness which is hard to come by in the world today."



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