**Public Records Request**

To Whom It May Concern,

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Boston University School of Public Health in the Department of Biostatistics. We are working on a project to develop methods to improve COVID-19 surveillance using wastewater data. The main objective is to develop methods to link wastewater data and reported cases of COVID-19 with two main goals: 1) estimate the degree to which wastewater is a leading indicator of COVID-19 activity, and 2) estimate the impact of at home testing, asymptomatic cases and mild cases on decreases cases being reported (i.e. comparing the omicron wave to prior waves of disease). Our project will result in statistically rigorous approaches to estimate the lag between wastewater and traditional case reporting, as well as a rigorous approach to determining the impact of various features of a covid-19 variant on case reporting.

There are two reasons we are seeking data with this request. The wastewater data that we have access to covers a combination of towns that do not align with publicly available COVID-19 case data, making it challenging to align the two data streams correctly. Additionally, there are typically lags between when an individual is tested and when their case is reported, therefore, having data to understand the timeliness of COVID-19 case reports (including test date and report date) is important to making our estimates more accurate and relevant to surveillance.

We request town level of COVID-19 daily new cases with the following:

1. Town name
2. Daily counts of cases reported with confirmed COVID-19 positive test by date reported
3. Daily counts of cases with confirmed COVID-19 positive test by date test was taken
4. Daily Counts of deaths (related to covid)

Alternatively, if we can obtain an individual level dataset with all COVID-19 confirmed cases in MA with the following recorded for each individual:

1. Town of residence
2. Date test was taken
3. Date result was reported
4. Date of symptom onset (when available)
5. Date of death (if applicable)

We have worked with this latter type of dataset, as provided by the CDC, but lacked town level information and it was only given to us for the first few months of the pandemic. We published a paper using this data that developed a novel method for estimating reproductive numbers for COVID-19.

If you believe any of the above requests are ambiguous, overly broad, or insufficiently specific for you to identify the records requested, please do not hesitate to contact us to explain how you organize and access that category of record so that we can try to revise the request with more specificity. If any records are withheld or redacted, please let us know. If some records become available sooner than others, please deliver them as they become ready rather than waiting for all records to become available. We would like to respect your time and resources by making this request as understandable and easy to comply with as possible.

Please also indicate the appropriate way to deliver the data. It would be perfect if records could be delivered as a spreadsheet by email.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this request, and please don’t hesitate to contact us with cost, questions, or updates.

Sincerely,

I am not sure we can estimate the actual number of cases, but thought we were more interested in estimating the lag between wastewater signals and reported cases. We also discussed noting the lower signal from reported cases during omicron relative to wastewater signal compared to other variants (so that part is somewhat getting at underreporting).