

Thursday, March 4, 2021

COVID-19 Command Center

Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency

Situation Update

The Command Center Situation Report is published weekly. The next report will be published on Thursday, 3/11/21.



Governor Baker visited a vaccine clinic on Monday at Morning Star Baptist Church in Mattapan. During this visit, Governor Baker met with community partners and discussed a statewide public awareness campaign featuring doctors of color and \$4.7 million for hyperlocal efforts to reduce barriers to vaccination.

In This Week's Report:

- Latest Data: Public Health & Vaccine Data Update
- Week in Review: Key State Actions
 - Fenway Mass Vax Site to Transition to Hynes Convention Center
 - Nearly \$40 Million awarded in Grants to 1,026 Additional Businesses for COVID Relief
 - K-12 Educators, Child Care Workers and K-12 School Staff Eligible for Vaccine Appointments Starting March 11th
 - \$4.9 Million Awarded for High School Substance Use and Mental Health Response Teams
 - DPH, Emergency Management, and Disaster Recovery Updates
 - Holyoke and Chelsea Soldiers' Homes Weekly Update

Helpful Links:

- [COVID-19 Vaccination Locations](#)
- [When can I get the COVID-19 vaccine?](#)
- [COVID-19 Vaccine in Massachusetts](#)
- [Public Messaging Resources for Municipalities & Businesses](#)
- [Mass.gov/findfoodhelp](#)
- [HandHoldMA.org](#)
- [Reopening Massachusetts](#)
- [Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency](#)
- [Unemployment & COVID-19](#)
- [Dept. Of Transitional Assistance Online Portal](#)
- [COVID-19 Cost Eligibility and Tracking Guidance](#)



Situation in Numbers

Massachusetts **current as of 3/4**

554,630 Total Confirmed Cases ([click here for more information](#))

15,967 Deaths among confirmed cases

16,522,351 tests for the virus conducted to date by MA State Public Health Laboratory, hospitals, and commercial laboratories.

United States **Last Updated 3/4**

Case numbers are updated regularly at noon. Saturday/Sunday reports are preliminary and have not been confirmed with state/territorial health departments.

Total Cases Reported to CDC:

28,580,198 Total Cases

517,224 Deaths

57 Jurisdictions Reporting Cases (50 states, D.C., Puerto Rico, Guam, Northern Marianas, Marshall Islands, American Samoa, and US V.I.)

Social Distancing Basics:

- ✓ Stay Home
- ✓ Call/Facetime/online chat with friends and loved ones.

If you go out for essential needs:

- ✓ Avoid crowds
- ✓ Stay 6 feet away from others
- ✓ Don't shake hands or hug
- ✓ Wear a face covering or mask.

COVID-19 RESPONSE COMMAND CENTER
WEEKLY SITUATION REPORT

Latest Data: COVID-19 Public Health Update

NOTE: Due to technical issues being experienced by the Tableau hosting platform, today's COVID-19 interactive dashboard is not available today.

Confirmed Cases

- Today there were **1,410** new, confirmed cases reported bringing the total to **554,630** confirmed cases.

Tests Reported

- There were **102,362** new COVID-19 molecular tests reported, bringing the cumulative total to **16,522,351** tests.

Hospitalizations

- There are **741** patients hospitalized for COVID-19.

Deaths

- Today there were **42** new, confirmed deaths reported. There have been **15,967** confirmed deaths in total.

Weekly Public Health Report:

The Command Center released the [Weekly Public Health Report, with town by town information, including the weekly listing of city and town risk levels](#) on Thursday, 3/4. The report also includes granular information on cases by county, biweekly testing rates, contact tracing information (including active COVID cluster information by Exposure Setting Type), hospitalization data, race and ethnicity data, information about cases in long term care facilities, and PPE distribution data.

Vaccine Update: For a more detailed weekly breakdown, [visit the MA COVID-19 Vaccination Data webpage](#).

	Feb 26 th	Feb 27 th	Feb 28 th	Mar 1 st	Mar 2 nd	Mar 3 rd	Mar 4 th
Doses shipped to MA providers (MIIS)*	1,524,965	1,526,135	1,526,135	1,526,135	1,526,135	1,735,465	1,805,625
Doses shipped to Pharmacies directly by the federal government - including FPPP providers (Tiberius)	501,935	521,825	522,995	523,295	534,245	563,135	593,475
Grand Total Shipped to MA	2,026,900	2,047,960	2,049,130	2,049,430	2,060,380	2,298,600	2,399,100
1st doses Administered (MIIS)* # of people with at least one dose	1,142,357	1,166,889	1,205,219	1,222,591	1,248,571	1,281,680	1,316,691
2nd doses Administered (MIIS)* # of people fully vaccinated	480,196	504,304	531,258	547,061	565,421	587,167	614,589
Grand Total Doses Administered (MIIS)*	1,622,553	1,671,193	1,736,477	1,769,652	1,813,992	1,868,847	1,931,280
% of total doses shipped that have been reported to MIIS as administered	80.1%	81.6%	84.7%	86.3%	88.0%	81.3%	80.5%

*Data from the Massachusetts Immunization Information System (MIIS) are as of midnight the night before.

Week in Review: State Actions

Transition of Fenway Park Mass Vaccination Site to Hynes Convention Center

The Baker-Polito Administration announced Thursday the transition of the Fenway Park mass vaccination site to the Hynes Convention Center. CIC Health will launch the Hynes Convention Center site on Thursday, March 18.

COVID-19 RESPONSE COMMAND CENTER WEEKLY SITUATION REPORT

The last day for appointments at Fenway Park will be Saturday, March 27. The two sites will overlap for approximately a week as the Hynes site ramps up capacity. All individuals that were vaccinated at Fenway Park and have a second dose appointment scheduled will be able to receive their second dose at Hynes. CIC Health will send individuals with appointments details via email.

Since the opening of the Fenway Park mass vaccination site in January, the Red Sox team and CIC Health, with Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, have operated this highly efficient, friendly, and effective vaccination site. To date, the site has completed over 25,000 vaccinations. By the end of this month, we expect they'll have completed over 55,000 vaccinations.

This month, the Hynes Convention Center site will ramp up to do the same volume of vaccinations as the current Fenway site – 1,500 per day. Later in the spring, dependent upon vaccine supply from the federal government, the Hynes has capacity to scale up to more than 5,000 shots per day.



As part of the Commonwealth's vaccine equity initiative, Governor Baker, Lt. Governor Polito, Secretary Sudders, Lawrence Mayor Kendrys Vasquez, and Greater Lawrence Family Health Center President & CEO John Silva visited a vaccination site for older adults in Lawrence today. The city of Lawrence is one 20 communities hard hit by COVID-19 that are part of the [vaccine equity initiative](#).

Nearly \$40 Million awarded in Grants to 1,026 Additional Businesses for COVID Relief

On Thursday, the Baker-Polito Administration announced approximately \$39.7 million in awards for 1,026 additional businesses in the ninth round of COVID relief grants administered by the Massachusetts Growth Capital Corporation (MGCC). As in prior rounds, each grant recipient meets sector and demographic priorities set for the two grant programs administered by MGCC.

With the addition of this round of grants, the Administration has awarded over \$602 million in direct financial support to 13,346 businesses across the Commonwealth.



"Our administration is pleased to award this latest round of direct financial support to 1,026 additional businesses hardest hit by the pandemic," said Governor Charlie Baker. "As the largest program of its kind in the nation, we are proud that Massachusetts Growth Capital Corporation grants have now reached 13,346 businesses across the Commonwealth."

"Recognizing the significant challenges, the pandemic has created for businesses throughout Massachusetts, we are glad to provide this continued support as we work toward recovery," said Lt. Governor Karyn Polito. "Our administration is grateful to MGCC for their partnership and hard work administering this grant program, ensuring these critical resources go directly to the businesses that serve the communities and neighborhoods in greatest need."

COVID-19 RESPONSE COMMAND CENTER WEEKLY SITUATION REPORT

As [announced last month](#), MGCC has also begun engaging directly with applicants that met sector and demographic priorities, but were missing documents necessary to be considered for an award.

“Understanding how important this grant program is to our strategy for economic recovery, it is critical to work closely with businesses to ensure anyone who applied and was eligible for an award can receive it,” said Secretary of Housing and Economic Development Mike Kennealy. “I want to express my deep gratitude to the team at MGCC for their diligence in working with program applicants seeking support. Thanks to their efforts, grant recipients for this round and the prior round are comprised entirely of eligible applicants who were able to provide all the necessary documentation to receive an award.”

Among the sectors that received the highest total number of grants this round are restaurants, bars, caterers, or food trucks (280); personal services businesses (207); and independent retailers (153).

Additionally, grants for this round were awarded to 295 minority-owned, and 406 women-owned, businesses; 295 recipients are in Gateway Cities, and 329 businesses awarded grants have not received any prior aid.

With public health metrics continuing to trend in a positive direction, including a decline in average daily COVID cases and hospitalizations, and as vaccination rates continue to increase, the Administration is taking steps to gradually reopen the Commonwealth’s economy. On Monday, March 1, 2021, the Commonwealth advanced to Step 2 of Phase III of the Administration’s [reopening plan](#). In addition, the Administration also recently [announced](#) its plan to transition to Step 1 of Phase IV on Monday, March 22, provided that public health metrics continue to improve.

K-12 Educators, Child Care Workers and K-12 School Staff Eligible for Vaccine Appointments Starting 3/11

On Wednesday, the Baker-Polito Administration announced that K-12 educators, childcare workers, and K-12 school staff will be eligible to schedule COVID-19 vaccine appointments starting March 11th.

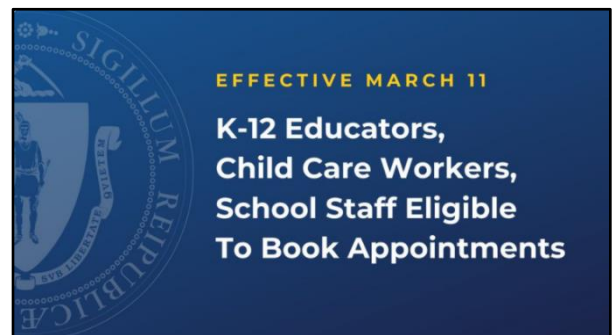
This group of workers will join the current eligible groups (including 65+ and individuals with 2+ certain medical conditions).

Teacher Vaccines

Beginning March 11th, all K-12 educators, childcare workers and K-12 school staff will be eligible to schedule appointments for the COVID-19 vaccine. Educators may book appointments at all 170 sites currently open to eligible residents in Massachusetts by visiting www.mass.gov/covidvaccinemap.

Additionally, the Command Center will work to designate specific days at the seven mass vaccination sites for educators to get their shots. More details will be released soon.

There are approximately 400,000 K-12 educators, child care workers and K-12 school staff in Massachusetts. Due to a severely constrained federal supply and the existing population that is currently eligible for vaccines, it is estimated that it will take a month for all eligible individuals to secure a first appointment. This timeframe is only subject to change if federal supply increases dramatically, including the recently authorized Johnson & Johnson vaccine.



COVID-19 RESPONSE COMMAND CENTER WEEKLY SITUATION REPORT

Vaccine Appointments

This week, the Commonwealth anticipates over 250,000 doses will be administered between first and second doses across all providers throughout the Commonwealth.

On Thursday, March 4th, 12,000 new first appointments for mass vaccination sites will be made available to eligible groups. Over 45,000 new second dose appointments have also been scheduled at mass vaccination sites.

The number of new appointments (first dose appointments) is less than previous weeks due to the volume of second dose appointments. 7,500 appointments have also been booked by the call center (211) for older adults who were unable to use a computer to book an appointment and required assistance.

As more individuals have received a first vaccine dose across the Commonwealth, there is a greater need to book second appointments, so the mass vaccination sites have fewer first dose appointments available on a weekly basis.

Later next week, a new Regional Collaboration will go live: The Lower Merrimack Valley regional collaboration, to include the City of Amesbury, Georgetown, Groveland, Merrimac, Newbury, Newburyport, Rowley, Salisbury and West Newbury. Details on this collaborative will be on the website at mass.gov/covidvaccinemap next week.

Johnson & Johnson Vaccine

The COVID-19 Command Center was notified that Massachusetts is receiving only one shipment of 58,000 doses for the month of March. These doses have been allocated – primarily to hospitals and health systems.

Based on information the Commonwealth has received from the federal government, the Administration does not expect to be able to order more J&J doses until the end of March or early April.

While the Commonwealth is receiving limited doses of the J&J vaccine in March, the Administration is continuing to plan for eventual widespread distribution of the J&J vaccine.

\$4.9 million awarded for high school substance use and mental health response teams

On Monday (3/1), The Baker-Polito Administration announced \$4.9 million in grants awarded to six agencies, including hospitals and treatment and behavioral health centers, for the creation of evidence-based and data-driven co-occurring substance use disorder/mental health response teams embedded in high schools in ten communities to offer intervention and treatment services, and provide alternatives to school suspension for substance use.



The six agencies were selected for grant funding based on their ability to provide access to these crucial services, both in school and in the community, as well as virtually due to instances of remote and hybrid learning. The awardees are:

- **Heywood Hospital**, providing services for Athol High School, Gardner High School, Gardner Academy of Learning and Tech, Ralph C. Mahar Regional School (Orange), Narragansett Regional High School (Templeton), and Murdock High School (Winchendon)
- **High Point Treatment Center**, providing services for New Bedford High School
- **Institute for Health and Recovery**, providing services for Malden High School

COVID-19 RESPONSE COMMAND CENTER WEEKLY SITUATION REPORT

- **North Suffolk Mental Health**, providing services for Revere High School
- **River Valley Counseling Center**, providing services for Holyoke High School North Campus
- **The Brien Center**, providing services for Monument Mountain Regional High (Great Barrington)

This grant award will ensure these agencies are prepared to offer services to students suffering from co-occurring substance use disorder/mental health issues. The programs will respond to students' and their families' needs, increase collaboration with schools, and provide support to students in crisis.

"Disruptions to in-school learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic have taken a social and emotional toll on many students, and especially those most at risk for substance use and mental health issues," said Health and Human Services Secretary Marylou Sudders, who directs the state's COVID-19 Command Center. "This grant will allow much-needed resources to reach students remotely and offer a mental health-driven alternative to suspensions."

The grant will be distributed over the course of 6 years, with each program receiving \$136,864 per year, or \$4.9 million over the life of the award. Funded through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) State Opioid Response grant, the grant will serve to support the Commonwealth-wide adolescent addiction workforce that is specifically trained and certified to provide targeted substance use interventions and treatment to at-risk students, reducing their risk of developing an opioid or substance use disorder. These timely awards will support Massachusetts schools' efforts to effectively respond to student substance use and mental health concerns, as access to high-potency marijuana products increases, rates of on-campus vaping surge, and the overall perception of harm associated with adolescent substance use decreases.

"Massachusetts is taking action to reinforce protections for children affected by substance use and mental health issues in these unprecedented times," said Deirdre Calvert, Director of the Bureau of Substance Addiction Services at the Department of Public Health. "This grant program will ensure that at-risk youth receive the services they need to prevent substance use, help combat the opioid epidemic, and support families during the COVID-19 state of emergency."

Important Updates

Department of Public Health Updates:

- DPH staff liaisons have been designated to work with 20 communities as part of the new equity initiative focused on hardest hit cities and towns. DPH is working with local organizations to provide resources to reach disparately impacted populations in each priority community. The press release can be found [here](#).
- Trusted voices from community and faith-based organizations are sharing videos to promote vaccination. Here is the latest from Amy Pessia, Executive Director of the Merrimack Valley Food Bank: <https://twitter.com/MVFoodBank/status/1366828370705678344>. The videos are helping to amplify DPH's "Trust the Facts, Get the Vax" public information campaign. Information and resources can be found [here](#).
- DPH issued the [Weekly COVID-19 Vaccine Provider Bulletin](#), for the week of 2/27
- DPH Epidemiology Line handled 355 COVID-19 calls and 80 non-COVID-19 calls for a total of 435 calls from 2/22 through 2/28
- As of 3/4, the Academic Public Health Volunteer Corps (APHVC) has 303 volunteers supporting 43 local boards of health. The APHVC also released its first newsletter, the [Corps Connection](#). For more information about the APHVC, please visit the [APHVC webpage](#) on Mass.gov.

COVID-19 RESPONSE COMMAND CENTER WEEKLY SITUATION REPORT

- COVID-19 Vaccine Hesitancy Survey - The APHVC developed a [survey](#) to assess vaccination attitudes and the degree of vaccine hesitancy among people in Massachusetts. Results from the survey will be used to understand communication needs and inform vaccine confidence messaging going forward. The initial deadline to complete the survey is March 12
- MA211 received 9,144 calls from Monday 2/22 through Sunday 2/28 for a new total of 248,204. These numbers do not reflect calls to the new appointment assistance call centers
- There were 16 deliveries to health care entities on Monday (3/1) (16 BinaxNOW Kits); 15 deliveries were made on Tuesday (3/2) (15 BinaxNOW kits); 29 deliveries were made on Thursday (3/4) (1 PPE, 24 BinaxNOW kits and 4 therapeutic) and 16 deliveries have been scheduled for Friday (3/5) (1 PPE, 13 BinaxNOW kits, 1 vaccine supplies and 1 therapeutic)
- DPH communicated an Abbott product expiry update, released 3/2, for the BinaxNOW COVID-19 Ag Card (part# 195-000). This update extends the expiration date an additional 3 months after the existing 6-month date for specific lot numbers
- DPH rescinded the Order of the Commissioner of Public Health Exempting Hospitals from the Requirements of M.G.L. c. 111, §231, and the Order of the Commissioner of Public Health Regarding Scheduling and Performance of Elective Invasive Procedures, both effective 3/1/21
- All HMCC Regions remain in Tier 3 in accordance with the DPH COVID-19 Resurgence Planning and Response Guidance for Acute Care Hospitals. DPH and the COVID-19 Command Center will continue to work closely with all regions to support strategies to improve hospital capacity statewide
- For the date range of 2/19 – 2/25, 94 of 96 Massachusetts hospitals were 100% compliant in their COVID-19 data submissions to the DPH WebEOC portal which is submitted to the federal HHS Protect portal daily
- There are currently 11 Rapid Response Teams, comprised of nursing staff, deployed to nursing homes across the Commonwealth. Teams are also helping nursing homes on the day of their Vaccine Clinics to ensure staff and residents are monitored after vaccination
- There are also 2 National Guard Teams deployed and supporting nursing and rest homes

Emergency Management and Disaster Recovery Updates:

Mass Care

- 3 state contracted isolation/recovery hotels in the communities of Everett, Pittsfield, and Taunton continue to receive client placements: 55 individuals are currently housed in the program.
 - Top 5 referring cities:
 - Boston (357)
 - Worcester (186)
 - Springfield (169)
 - Cambridge (117)
 - Brockton (114)
 - To date, a total of 2,095 residents have been placed in these hotels for safe isolation and recovery, an increase of 32 since last week

Community Food Box Program Update 2/26-3/4:

MEMA is partnering with the Salvation Army, and a vendor, to bring in shelf-stable food boxes each week to support communities in their effort to deliver food to individuals and families in quarantine and isolation who require assistance accessing food. Each week MEMA's warehouse receives a delivery of shelf-stable food boxes. Distribution of food boxes is coordinated between MEMA and communities in need via a request through WebEOC. The table below reflects the current food box inventory, and number of food boxes distributed to communities during the weekly reporting period (data is updated every Friday).

COVID-19 RESPONSE COMMAND CENTER

WEEKLY SITUATION REPORT

Total Number of Food Boxes in MEMA's Inventory	Total Number of Food Boxes Distributed to One or More Local Communities During the Reporting Period	Total Number of Communities that Received Food Boxes During the Reporting Period
2,381	180	4

Logistics (including Personal Protective Equipment and Supplies)

- 50 orders prepared for pickup or delivery from the MEMA State Logistics Warehouse from 2/26-3/4
- The Wakefield Isolation hotel will demobilize on Friday (3/5)
- MEMA's allotment of durable equipment from the UMass Lowell Field Hospital was returned to our inventory this week
- The UMass Worcester Stop the Spread Site was sent a delivery of 150,000 KN95 on March 4th

Disaster Recovery

On March 27, 2020, the President [declared](#) a Major Disaster Declaration for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts related to the COVID-19 pandemic response. Through this declaration, federal aid will be made available to cities and towns, state agencies, and certain non-profits in all Massachusetts counties to help pay for emergency protective measures (response costs) related to the COVID-19 pandemic. MEMA's Recovery Unit has developed a [webpage](#) with information and guidance on, but not limited to, disaster declaration, eligibility criteria, and the application process. Highlights from the Disaster Recovery process include the following:

MEMA COVID-19 EXECUTIVE DASHBOARD			
AGGREGATE PROGRAM VIEW			
<small>Note: Financial data for pre-submission projects reflect 100% federal cost share while submitted projects continue to reflect 75% federal cost share. The remaining 25% federal cost share for submitted projects will be reported as FEMA adjusts cost share for these projects on a rolling basis. In addition, figures do not include MEMA management cost allowance.</small>			
Overall (Best Available Estimate)	Submitted (Eligibility & Cost Review)	Approved* (by FEMA)	Paid (by MEMA)
\$1.4B +\$307.48M	\$1.1B +\$313.73M	\$515.8M +\$209.42K	\$290.9M +\$967.38K
937 Projects +13	648 Projects +10	155 Projects +6	74 Projects +10
Approved Applicants: 652			

- FEMA Requests for Public Assistance (RPA): 663 (+1)
- Technical Assistant Requests: 516 (+1)
- FEMA-4496-DR-MA Crisis Counseling Immediate Services Program (ISP) grant was closed on February 22, 2021, pursuant to 2 C.F.R. § 200.343. The total cost for this ISP award was \$608,817.73. The Crisis Counseling Regular Services Program (RSP) continues to be funded through May 15, 2021
- Conducting FEMA Public Assistance guidance calls with entities in the Commonwealth operating regional COVID-19 vaccination sites
- Distributed non-congregate shelter survey to collect data for 2/15-3/15/21 FEMA reporting period.
- New Streamlined project obligations (6): \$353,873.40

COVID-19 RESPONSE COMMAND CENTER
WEEKLY SITUATION REPORT

COVID-19 Cases in Long-Term Care (LTC) Facilities (as of 3/4)	
Residents/Healthcare Workers of LTC Facilities	34,703
LTC Facilities Reporting at Least One Case of COVID-19	424
Deaths Reported in LTC Facilities	8,647



Holyoke Soldiers' Home Weekly Update (current as of 3/3/21)

- This week, the Soldiers' Home in Holyoke welcomes a new Chief Financial Officer, the latest permanent leadership hire as we rebuild staff and management, positioning the facility to move forward safely. The Soldiers' Home leadership is committed to ensuring the safety of the Veteran residents and restoring the Home to its rightful place that treats them with dignity, honor, and respect.
- The Soldiers' Home in Holyoke has re-opened in-person visitation for veteran residents and their loved ones, starting February 10, 2021, and since then has hosted 233 visitors.
 - The Home is implementing updated guidance from DPH to ensure the safety and wellbeing of residents, staff, and those visiting. All visitors are screened and required to wear PPE and social distance, and negative test results are strongly encouraged before visiting. There is designated visitation space at each Home, and high touch surfaces will be sanitized after each visit.
 - Visitation is taking place Tuesday through Saturday, from 9:00am to 3:00pm, and 24 slots will be offered each day. Visits will be scheduled for at least 45 minutes.
 - Visits can be scheduled by calling the Family Line at 413-552-4764. 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
 - The Soldiers' Home in Holyoke will also continue to offer and support virtual visitation. The Family Line is available for ad hoc updates with support from social work and clinical staff.
 - Families can also request updates via email at CommunicationsMailbox-HLY@Mass.gov. Note: The Soldiers' Home can only share medical information about a resident with the authorized health care proxy on file.
- CVS Health returned to the Home on February 9 for the third and final onsite vaccine clinic, to administer second doses of the vaccine to those vaccinated, and first doses to individuals who newly consented. The first and second vaccination clinics were held on December 29 and January 19. Following the completion of the vaccination clinics. At the Soldiers' Home in Holyoke:
 - **117** veteran residents and **220** staff have received both doses.
 - **1** veteran resident and **10** staff have received their first dose.
- The Home is strongly encouraging all staff to receive the vaccine. On top of the efforts to provide educational information about the COVID-19 vaccine, including COVID-19 vaccine FAQ sheets, and vaccine informational forums with clinical staff, individuals who had not been vaccinated received individual outreach to provide education and encourage vaccination. All educational materials are available in both English and Spanish.
- Phase III of the Refresh Project continues on the 4th Floor. The Refresh Project is an important infection control initiative to improve the home in the immediate term for residents and staff.
 - On February 11, the Baker-Polito Administration [filed a \\$400 million bond bill](#) which would provide capital authorization for the major project to reconstruct the long-term care facility at the Holyoke Soldiers' Home. The Commonwealth has been making capital investments to address the short and long-term needs of the Home. This includes a short-term Refresh Project

COVID-19 RESPONSE COMMAND CENTER

WEEKLY SITUATION REPORT

and this longer-term Rapid Planning Capital Project (www.mass.gov/HolyokeSHProject) for a future Soldiers' Home in Holyoke. While the expedited capital project will address long-term facility

needs, the Executive Office of Health and Human Services, Department of Veterans' Services, and Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance have been addressing immediate capital needs, including a \$6 million refresh of units to significantly improve infection control for the residents and staff.

- This bond bill is the next step of the expedited capital project, following the recommendations laid out in the [needs assessment report](#) that was released on Veterans Day, following the [Rapid Planning Phase](#). Payette Associates is the design firm leading the design and planning phase, building on the evaluation they previously completed, and developing a full project scope, refining the plan, confirming the budget, timelines, and ensuring conformity with the regulatory process. To meet the VA State Home Construction Grant's April 15, 2021 deadline, the bond bill must be enacted by mid-March, with a terms bill filed and enacted soon afterwards. The design development phase must be completed by August 1, 2021 to be eligible for this cycle of the grant program.
- The Soldiers' Home is working with Home Base, a veteran support organization that is a partnership of the Red Sox Foundation and Massachusetts General Hospital, to help improve the quality of life, increase psychosocial interventions to address isolation during the pandemic. Home Base has linked us to virtual concerts provided by professional and amateur volunteers. The concerts are interactive—featuring musical performances and conversation between the Veterans and musicians. The concerts occur every Tuesday and Thursday afternoon. The team at Home Base is working with Social Work, Recreation and Nursing to provide other opportunities for virtual activities. Home Base has extended their free veteran counseling offerings to our Soldier's Home families and staff.
- The Soldiers' Home in Holyoke is taking every precaution to mitigate COVID-19 entering and spreading at the Soldiers' Home in Holyoke. Based on guidance from DPH, and in consultation with infection control experts, the Home is continuing mandatory 2 times per week testing for all staff and residents. Increased testing frequency will allow us to detect COVID-19 early and will continue until the Home receives 14 consecutive days of negative results.
 - The Soldiers' Home in Holyoke has been intently focused on following infection control procedures and maintaining best practices for the safety of veteran residents and staff. All veteran residents' health is being monitored and retesting is being conducted for veterans both on- and off-site as clinically appropriate. The Soldiers' Home's medical team is making all clinical decisions following [the latest CDC guidance](#), which continues to evolve as the medical community learns more about this new virus.
 - In addition to mandatory testing at state-operated 24/7 facilities, daily symptom checking and routine staff surveillance testing are important tools to protect staff, residents and visitors and will remain in place until such time there is a medical breakthrough or a safe and effective vaccine for COVID 19. Staff who are not feeling well are instructed not to come to work and to contact their health care provider. If staff show any signs of COVID-symptoms, they are required to self-quarantine at home, per CDC guidance for health care workers.

The status of all residents as of March 2 is as follows:

- 0 veteran residents are positive and not clinically recovered
- 2 veteran residents are negative
- 43 veteran residents have a pending test. Please note that all veteran residents and staff are now being tested twice weekly, which will increase the number of pending tests.
- 74 veteran residents have been determined clinically recovered

COVID-19 RESPONSE COMMAND CENTER WEEKLY SITUATION REPORT

- 0 veteran residents have refused testing

Resident locations:

- 116 veteran residents are onsite
- 3 veteran residents are receiving acute care offsite
- Since March 1, 2020 there have been 77 deaths of veteran residents who tested positive

Following the most recent staff surveillance testing

- 0 are positive
- All others who previously tested positive are clinically recovered

Chelsea Soldiers' Home Weekly Update (current as of 3/1/21)

- The Soldiers' Home in Chelsea has re-opened in-person visitation for veteran residents and their loved ones, starting February 10, 2021, and has since hosted 73 in-person visits with veterans.
 - The Home is implementing updated guidance from DPH to ensure the safety and wellbeing of residents, staff, and those visiting. All visitors are screened and required to wear PPE and social distance, and negative test results are strongly encouraged before visiting. There is designated visitation space at each Home, and high touch surfaces will be sanitized after each visit.
 - Visitation is taking place Monday through Friday 9:00am-7:30pm, and 8 slots will be offered each day; and Saturday & Sunday from 1pm-4pm, and 3 slots will be offered each day. Visits will be scheduled for at least 45 minutes long.
 - The Soldiers' Home in Chelsea will also continue to offer and support virtual visitation.
 - Families can request updates on their loved ones by contacting their assigned social worker, or emailing the Home at CSH@mass.gov. Medical information can only be shared with an authorized health care proxy.
- CVS Health returned to the Home on February 9 for the third and final onsite vaccine clinic to administer second doses of the vaccine to those vaccinated, and first doses to individuals who newly consented. The first and second vaccination clinics were held on December 29 and 30, and January 19 and 20. Following the completion of the onsite vaccination clinics:
 - 159 residents and 208 staff have received both doses
 - 6 veteran residents and 67 staff have received their first dose.
- The Home remains vigilant in its infection control, including enhanced precautions throughout the facility and strict infection control protocols to keep veteran residents and staff safe, including continuing staff education, screening, and testing.
 - Clinical staff closely monitor any changes in residents, and the Soldiers' Home's medical team is making all clinical decisions following [the latest CDC guidance](#), which continues to evolve as the medical community learns more about this new virus. The CDC recommends making medical decisions regarding when to end isolation and determine that the patient has recovered based on symptoms and time elapsed.
 - The Soldiers' Home in Chelsea currently weekly staff surveillance testing. In accordance with [CMS rules](#), the Soldiers' Home is now conducting weekly testing until the facility is 14 days without positive test results. These tests are provided at no cost to employees.
 - The Soldiers' Home in Chelsea monitors the PPE supply, and continues to receive shipments of PPE. The Incident Command team at the Chelsea Soldiers' Home continues to enforce staff use of personal protective equipment (PPE), as well as source PPE to ensure that residents and staff have access to critical safety equipment. The team continues to coordinate closely with the VA Health Care System.

COVID-19 RESPONSE COMMAND CENTER WEEKLY SITUATION REPORT

The status as of March 2 is as follows:

Residents:

- 1 veteran resident is positive, in independent living
- 126 veteran residents are negative
- 47 veteran residents have recovered, meaning they previously tested positive and are now clinically recovered
- 0 veteran residents have pending tests
- Since March 1, 2020 there have been 31 deaths of veteran residents who tested positive

Following the most recent staff surveillance testing:

- 1 employee is positive
- All other employees who previously tested positive have been determined clinically recovered

Communications Resources

Public Messaging Resources for Communities:

The COVID-19 Command Center and DPH have produced many communication resources aimed at helping communities inform and educate residents on recent executive orders and guidance related to COVID-19.

New Resources:

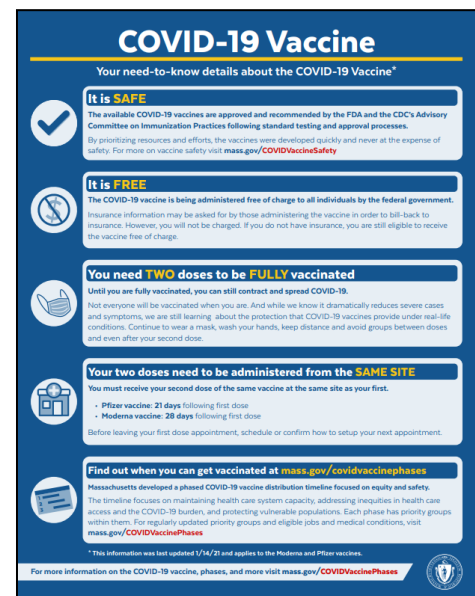
- [Trust the Facts, Get the Vax Campaign Materials | Mass.gov](#)
- [COVID-19 Vaccine Posters | Mass.gov](#)
- [Preparing for your COVID-19 Vaccination Appointment flier | Mass.gov](#)
- [Guide to hosting a forum on the COVID-19 Vaccine | Mass.gov](#)

Visitors to COVID-19 resources for municipalities webpage will find these new resources, and additional flyers, posters, and digital resources in multiple languages on topics such as:

- [When can I get the COVID-19 vaccine?](#)
- [Vaccine Graphics](#)
- [Statewide guidelines, advisories, and orders](#)
- [Staying safe in the community](#)
- [Using local public alert systems for COVID-19 information](#)
- [Materials for Business](#), including:
 - Return to work guidance
 - Employee Screening Questionnaire
 - Business guidance – New, Temporary Capacity Limits
 - Updated safe store tips for retailers

Additional DPH Stop the Spread Materials in Multiple Languages

- [Facts Sheets](#)
- [Videos](#)



COVID-19 RESPONSE COMMAND CENTER WEEKLY SITUATION REPORT

Resources

MassSupport

MassSupport is the Massachusetts Crisis Counseling Program funded by the Federal Emergency Management Agency and managed in partnership between the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health and Riverside Trauma Center, a program of Riverside Community Care.

Contact MassSupport by phone at **888-215-4920** or by email at MassSupport@riversidecc.org

Red Cross Virtual Family Assistance Center

In order to provide support to families and communities who have suffered loss as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the American Red Cross has developed a Virtual Family Assistance Center (VFAC), staffed by a team of specially trained mental health, spiritual care, and health services volunteers who are:

- Connecting with families over the phone to offer condolences, emotional and spiritual support, and access to available resources
- Providing support for virtual memorial services for families, including connecting with local faith-based community partners
- Hosting online classes to foster resilience and facilitate coping skills
- Assisting families with access to national, state, or local resources such as grief counseling, legal resources, funeral information, financial information services, or veterans' assistance
- Additional state- and local-specific resources are available.

People can visit: <https://www.redcross.org/virtual-family-assistance-center/ma-family-assistance-center.html> to access this resource with special virtual programs, information, referrals, and services to support families in need. People without internet access can **call toll-free 833-492-0094** for help. All Family Assistance Center support will be provided virtually and is completely confidential and free.

Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) now reports on the number of positive COVID-19 cases as reported to the DESE by school districts (including charter schools), collaboratives, and approved special education schools. The data only represents what has been reported to DESE. For more information and to view the report people can visit: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/positive-cases/>

COVID-19 Test Site Locator

MEMA, in conjunction with the COVID-19 Command Center, has developed an [interactive tool](#) that shows the locations of COVID-19 testing sites around the Commonwealth.

Massachusetts COVID-19 Response Dashboard

MEMA has developed and maintains a public-facing COVID-19 ArcGIS Online dashboard, available [here](#). This dashboard is continuously updated and captures information about current COVID 19 case counts, cases by age, cases by county, hospital status, hospital bed status, death tolls, and deaths by age. Users should refresh the dashboard daily as enhancements are continuously being added.

Health care facilities can learn more about [requesting personal protective equipment here](#).

Stay Informed

- Get information from trusted sources. Get notified by text, email, or phone call in your preferred language. Visit <https://member.everbridge.net/index/406686158291020/#/signup> to sign-up for **AlertsMA** for the latest news on the Commonwealth's response to COVID-19
- Take care of your emotional health:

COVID-19 RESPONSE COMMAND CENTER WEEKLY SITUATION REPORT

- Call 2-1-1 and choose the “CALL2TALK” option.
- Samaritans is continuing operations 24/7, as always. During this unprecedented time, it can feel overwhelming to receive constant messages about COVID-19. Call or text their 24/7 helpline any time at 877-870-4673.
- The Disaster Distress Helpline, 1-800-985-5990, is a 24/7, 365-day-a-year, national hotline dedicated to providing immediate crisis counseling for people who are experiencing emotional distress related to any natural or human-caused disaster, including disease outbreaks like COVID-19. This toll-free, multilingual, and confidential crisis support service is available to all residents in the United States and its territories.

How to Help Out

- [Donate](#) to the Massachusetts COVID-19 Relief Fund

The Need for Blood Donations Continues, and Recovered COVID-19 Donors Can Help Save Lives

In coordination with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the Red Cross is seeking people who are fully recovered from the new coronavirus to sign up to donate plasma to help current COVID-19 patients. People who have fully recovered from COVID-19 have antibodies in their plasma that can attack the virus. This convalescent plasma is being evaluated as treatment for patients with serious or immediately life-threatening COVID-19 infections, or those judged by a healthcare provider to be at high risk of progression to severe or life-threatening condition. Interested individuals can visit [RedCrossBlood.org/plasma4covid](https://www.RedCrossBlood.org/plasma4covid) to learn more. The Red Cross follows the highest standards of safety and infection control, and volunteer donors are the only source of blood for those in need. To make an appointment to donate, please visit www.RedCrossBlood.org