Thursday, November 19, 2020

COVID-19 Command Center

Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency

Situation Update

The Command Center Situation Report is published weekly on Thursdays.



On Wednesday, Governor Baker, EOHSS Sec. Sudders and DESE Comm. Riley provided several COVID-19 response updates including on college travel protocols and point of care testing in schools across the Commonwealth. Story below.

In This Week's Report:

- Latest Data: Public Health Update
- Week in Review: Key State Actions
  - MassWorks Funding Announced for Infrastructure Projects
  - Higher Ed. Holiday Travel Guidance; Abbot BinaxNOW Testing
  - DPH Updates Quarantine Guidance
  - New Long Term Care Resources for Families
  - Webinars for Municipalities, Schools, Higher Ed on FEMA Public Assistance Program
  - Massachusetts 2-1-1 Milestone

Helpful Links:

- **NEW:** Mass.gov/holidays
- Tips for a Safe Thanksgiving
- Mass.gov/findfoodhelp
- Stop the Spread
- HandHoldMA.org
- Reopening Massachusetts
- Mass.Gov/covid19
- Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency
- Unemployment & COVID-19
- Dept. Of Transitional Assistance Online Portal
- Emergency Childcare Site
- COVID-19 Cost Eligibility and Tracking Guidance

Situation in Numbers

Massachusetts current as of 11/19

192,050 Total Confirmed Cases (click here for more information)

10,204 Deaths among confirmed cases

7,576,974 tests for the virus conducted to date by MA State Public Health Laboratory, hospitals, and commercial laboratories.

United States Last Updated 11/19

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:

11,465,722 Total Cases

249,670 Deaths

56 Jurisdictions Reporting Cases (50 states, D.C., Puerto Rico, Guam, Northern Marianas, Marshall Islands, 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 if physical distancing is not possible.

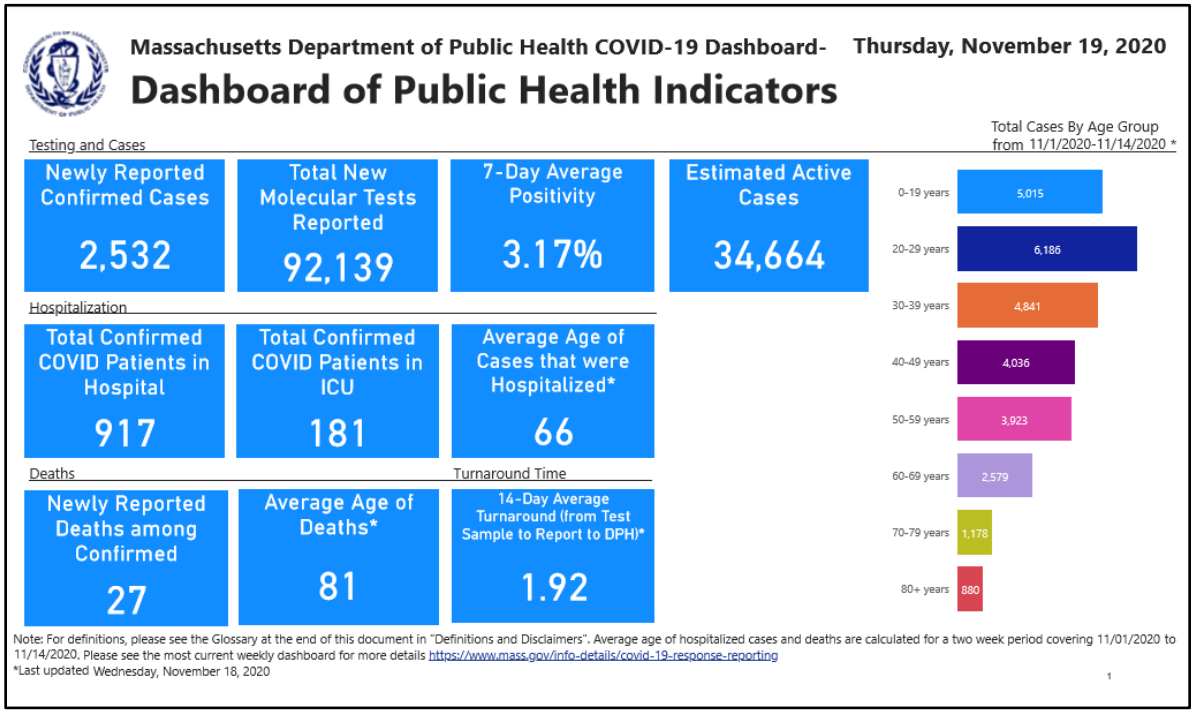
COVID-19 RESPONSE COMMAND CENTER
WEEKLY SITUATION REPORT

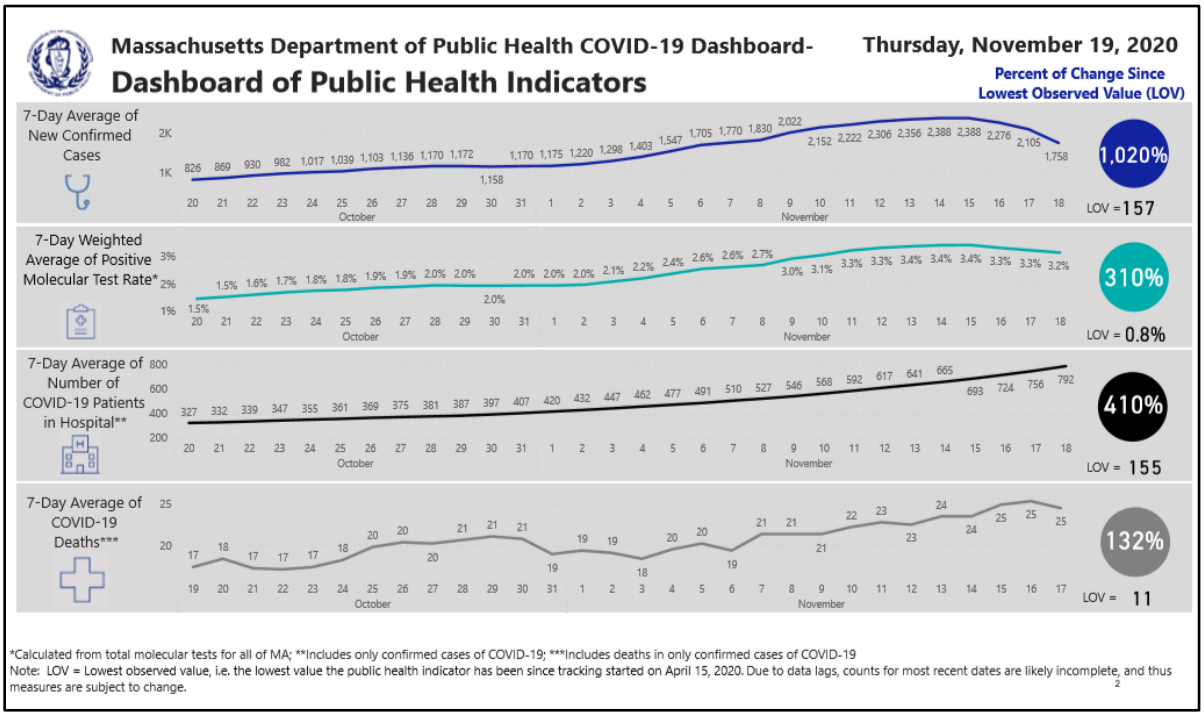
Latest Data: COVID-19 Public Health Update

***Testing Update**:*

Today, over **92,000** new molecular (viral) tests were reported in Massachusetts with **2,532** newly reported confirmed positive cases. The total number of molecular tests administered to date is over **7.5 million**.

***Hospitalizations & Capacity Update**:* As of today, **917** people are hospitalized, with **181** reported to be in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU). Key indicators from today's Daily Dashboard are below.





COVID-19 RESPONSE COMMAND CENTER
WEEKLY SITUATION REPORT

Weekly Public Health Report:
Today the Command Center released the **Weekly Public Health Report, with town by town information, including the weekly listing of city and town risk levels**. The report posted today 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.

Week in Review: State Actions

$68 Million in MassWorks Funding Announced for Infrastructure Projects:

Today, Governor Charlie Baker, Lt. Governor Karyn Polito, and Secretary of Housing and Economic Development Mike Kennealy joined members of the Legislature and local officials to announce the 2020 Round of the **MassWorks Infrastructure Grant Program**. This year's awards will invest nearly $68 million in 36 projects to support housing, economic development, and road safety projects in 35 cities and towns from across the Commonwealth. The awards were announced during a virtual ceremony, and are part of the Administration's **comprehensive economic recovery initiative**, *Partnerships for Recovery.*

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic and to support the Commonwealth's hardest hit communities, the Administration prioritized projects that are at an advanced stage of planning, design, and permitting. These projects, which are ready to start construction in spring 2021, also support strategic goals that are central to *Partnerships for Recovery*. For example, the City of Haverhill will use MassWorks funds for infrastructure improvements that will unlock 290 housing units and new retail space and create 20 permanent full-time jobs. In Leominster, water and sewer upgrades will benefit the expansion of the Mall at Whitney Field. As a result of public infrastructure investments, the cities of Brockton and Pittsfield will also realize new redevelopment opportunities through both commercial and residential projects. (**See News Release** for more information and a complete list of grants announced today.)

Higher Ed. Holiday Travel Guidance; Abbot BinaxNOW Point of Care Testing for K-12 Schools:



Wednesday, the Baker-Polito Administration released updated travel guidance to colleges and universities in advance of the approaching holiday season. These updated guidelines are focused on a robust testing initiative to reduce the risk of college students bringing COVID-19 home to their families and communities before Thanksgiving.

Students who leave campuses for the holidays should first receive a negative COVID-19 test administered by the college within 72 hours of their planned departure. Residential colleges should also offer COVID-19 tests to students living off campus that plan on returning home for the holidays.

Prior to sending students home for Thanksgiving and the upcoming holiday season, colleges and universities are urged to inform all students of the serious risks associated with going home before first receiving a negative COVID-19 test result.

Testing Positive

Students who receive a positive test result before they are scheduled to leave campus should instead immediately isolate in campus housing designated for COVID-positive students.

Students in Isolation

Students who have previously tested positive for COVID-19 and are already isolating in campus housing should remain in place until they have completed the 10-day isolation period.

Students in Quarantine

Students who are quarantined on campus housing due to close contact with someone who tested positive should remain in place until they complete the 14-day quarantine period, as prescribed by the Department of Public Health.

Quarantined students may leave campus housing after 10 days if they do not have any symptoms and they receive a negative result from a molecular diagnostic test administered at least 8 days after exposure to someone diagnosed with COVID-19.

Return to Campus

Students returning to campus from either within Massachusetts or from other states must produce a negative COVID-19 test result administered within 72 hours of their return to campus. Colleges should administer tests immediately to any student who returns to campus that has not been tested within 72 hours. Testing should apply to all students loving both on and off campus.

Related: Northeast Governors announce they will encourage residential colleges and universities in their respective states to provide testing for all students traveling home for Thanksgiving break to the maximum extent possible before they leave campus.

Abbott BinaxNOW COVID-19 Testing Initiative

Additionally, Baker-Polito Administration announced the distribution of the first round of Abbott BinaxNOW tests from the federal government that has been prioritized for use in K-12 schools providing in-person instruction.175 million tests were procured by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the U.S. Department of Defense and are being allocated on a per capita basis to states. Phase 1 of this testing initiative will reach 134 public school districts, charter schools and special education schools across the Commonwealth. Guidance was released from the Department of Elementary Education on Monday, November 16th and the tests are expected to be released by December 1st.

The Abbott BinaxNOW COVID-19 testing initiative is provided by the federal government and is a no-cost, voluntary program that will allow schools to test symptomatic students and receive test results within 15 minutes. These tests allow schools to identify infected individuals and their close contacts more quickly to help stop the spread.

Phase 1 is intended for districts and schools providing any type of in-person instruction, including full in-person, hybrid instructional models, or in-person services for high needs students. Districts and schools participating in Phase 1 have already been selected, and those chosen will have to meet six criteria, including the ability to

complete DPH reporting requirements and ensure staff who administer the tests are trained. Schools must also obtain parent/guardian consent prior to administering tests to students.

The BinaxNOW Rapid Point of Care testing initiative offers testing in a school setting to students or staff that exhibit any symptoms of an illness consistent with COVID-19 as well as to students or staff who exhibit minimal symptoms (e.g., runny nose, isolated headache, isolated fatigue).

The Abbott BinaxNOW test is a rapid antigen test. Rapid antigen tests perform best when the person is tested in the early stages of infection with SARS-CoV-2, which is when the viral load is generally highest.

School districts seeking more information on the BinaxNOW Rapid Point of Care testing initiative should visit **https://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/**

Abbott BinaxNOW Validation Work

In order to test the validity of the Abbott BinaxNOW tests, the Department of Public Health (DPH) recently completed a study to compare the rapid point-of-care Abbott BinaxNOW test to the PCR test, the gold standard for detecting COVID-19. The Abbott BinaxNOW Ag Card rapid test is a simple, quick, inexpensive test that produces results in approximately 15 minutes.

DPH collaborated with Lawrence General Hospital, Boston Children's Hospital, and the Broad Institute to enroll over 1,600 individuals between October 26 and November 12 at the Lawrence Community COVID-19 Testing Center, a state-supported Stop the Spread site. Overall, the BinaxNOW test detected COVID-19 in 82% of participants who tested PCR positive in the study, an encouraging finding that builds the state's confidence in the accuracy of these new tests.

DPH Updates Quarantine Guidance:

On Wednesday, the Department of Public Health updated its guidance and information for individuals in quarantine due to COVID-19. The guidance provides new information on the 14-day quarantine requirement, and the conditions that must be met to 'test-out' after at least ten days in quarantine. For more complete information on the new quarantine guidance, **visit the DPH website**.

> **Related:** NEW RESOURCE – **What to do while you wait for a COVID-19 Test Result**.
> (Available in multiple languages.)

New Long-Term Care Resources for Families:



Last week, EOHHS Secretary Marylou Sudders, director of the COVID-19 Response Command Center, wrote a letter to families of individuals in long term and congregate care facilities. The letter, available in both **English** and **Spanish**, provides important tips and considerations when planning holiday celebrations with a loved one who lives in a congregate setting. Many people living in congregate settings are uniquely vulnerable to COVID-19 and may have health conditions putting them at a higher risk of becoming sick, or even severely ill, with COVID-19. Additionally, the Command Center has also developed a new **COVID-19 Family Information Center webpage**, with the latest information and resources for families and loved ones of residents in nursing homes.

Webinars for Municipalities, Schools, Higher Ed & Others on FEMA Public Assistance Program:

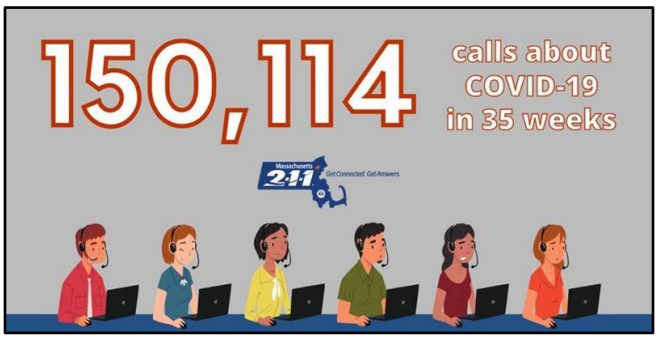
With the ability of municipal governments to expend funds from the federal government's *CARES Act – Municipal Program* coming to a close on December 30, 2020, the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) will be hosting a series of webinars in December to review ongoing support available to municipalities, schools, and certain nonprofit organizations, through FEMA's Public Assistance Program. The webinars will cover cost eligibility and documentation requirements, as well as guidance for applicants to determine what costs can and cannot be covered under the program.

The webinars have been organized by applicant type to provide information on common questions and concerns of specific sectors. MEMA recommends that applicants choose to attend a session that best describes their organization to learn the most relevant costs and documentation requirements.

- Find the schedule of webinars here
- Attendees are also encouraged to submit questions in advance of the webinars here

All sessions will be recorded and made available on MEMA's website.

Massachusetts 2-1-1 Marks a Milestone:



Massachusetts 2-1-1, the state's COVID-19 information and referral call center, recently surpassed 150,000 calls since the start of the pandemic. Since the official announcement in March, 2-1-1 call takers have provided real-time COVID-19 information, resources, and referrals in multiple languages to callers 24 hours a day. 2-1-1 is also handling calls related to housing needs as part of the state's Comprehensive Eviction Diversion Initiative.

In addition to COVID-19 information, 2-1-1 also still provides its regular free information & referral services to help connect callers with local programs - childcare, mental health, housing & more.

Residents with questions should dial 2-1-1 from any landline or cellphone.

Important Updates

Department of Public Health Updates:

- A message from DPH Commissioner Bharel will be sent to 4.5 million phone lines across Massachusetts today (11/19) in both English and Spanish via the Everbridge Resident Connection Alerts System. The message will remind residents of Thanksgiving safety measures and reference gathering limits and quarantine orders for visitors from high risk states.
- DPH has revised its daily dashboard to focus on current and cumulative metrics most important to track the pandemic. The weekly report comes out Thursdays. Look for both here.
- Keep updated on preparations for a COVID-19 vaccine by checking our webpage at www.mass.gov/COVIDvaccine.
- MA211 received 3,026 calls from Wednesday 11/11 through Sunday 11/15 for a new total of 151,700.

- Starting in early December, 134 school districts, charter schools and special education collaboratives will have access to these rapid COVID-19 tests for students or staff members who show symptoms of the respiratory disease while school is in session.
- There were 10 deliveries to health care entities on Tuesday (11/17) (2 PPE/8 testing supplies), and 24 deliveries have been scheduled for Friday (11/20) (3 PPE/20 testing supplies and 1 Remdesivir).
- DPH received a Week 1 allocation of Bamlanivimab on 11/13 of 1020 doses and were notified of the Week 2 allocation of 560 doses. DPH convened a Therapeutics Working Group that is recommending an equitable allocation strategy.
- For the date range of 11/6-11/12, 95 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.
- Resurgence planning meetings continued this week with the HMCC regions. All regions remain in Tier 1.
- DPH provided a letter to LTCFs that offers recommendations for families to safely celebrate the holiday season with their loved one(s). The Department encourages facilities to distribute the appropriate letter to families in advance of the Thanksgiving holiday.
- DPH issued updated guidance regarding admissions, safety protocols and use of personal protective equipment (PPE) for LTCF.
- DPH issued Updated Guidance for Implementing Order of the Commissioner of the Public Health Regarding Control of COVID-19 in Long-Term Care Facilities.

Emergency Management and Disaster Recovery Updates:

Mass Care

- 1 state contracted isolation/recovery hotel in the city of Everett continues to receive client placements.
  - Currently 68 residents are housed in this hotel (+9 change since last Thursday)
  - To date, a total of 812 residents have been placed in this hotel for safe isolation and recovery.
- The second state contracted isolation/recovery hotel in Taunton is scheduled to open tomorrow afternoon (11/20).
- Coordination continues to identify a state contracted isolation/recovery hotel site in Western Massachusetts.

Logistics (including Personal Protective Equipment and Supplies)

- 39 orders were prepared for pickup or delivery from MEMA's warehouse between 11/13 and 11/19
- This week, the Warehouse supported deliveries to 11 CEIT Sites, totaling 186,000 KN-95, 30,240 Packs of Alcohol-Based Hand Wipes, 2,016 pairs of heavy-duty gloves, and 28 Hand Sanitizer Stations
- A two-week supply of PPE, administrative supplies, and housekeeping supplies were deployed to the second Isolation Hotel in Taunton on 11/19/2020
- MEMA's Field Deployable Medical Station is prepared to deploy to the DCU Center on 11/23/2020

Disaster Recovery

On March 27, 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:

FEMA Public Assistance Program

MEMA COVID-19 EXECUTIVE DASHBOARD

Data as of: 11/13/2020

AGGREGATE PROGRAM VIEW

Note: Financial data represents 75% federal cost share; figures do not include MEMA management cost allowance

Overall (Best Available Estimate)	Submitted (Eligibility & Cost Review)	Approved (by FEMA)	Paid (by MEMA)
$600.8M +$1.75M	$420.4M +$1.73M	$7.5M +$117.56K	$6.9M $0
808 Projects +16	529 Projects +10	41 Projects +3	26 Projects 0

Approved Applicants: 610

- The MA Emergency Management Agency will be offering multiple sessions to review FEMA Public Assistance cost eligibility and documentation requirements with applicants. With the issuance of new FEMA guidance on cost eligibility, MEMA will present on current and past guidance as well as costs that are being questioned and determined ineligible by FEMA. MEMA will also review documentation requirements based on project size to prepare applicants to submit a complete project package to FEMA. The schedule of webinars can be found on MEMA's website here.

Long Term Recovery Program

- The Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) has facilitated a presentation of the final Rapid Needs Assessment (RNA) for the Massachusetts Association of Regional Planning Agencies (MARPA), Economic Development Planners working group this past Wednesday, 11/18. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Northeastern University Global Resilience Institute (GRI) presented the final RNA and answered any questions the MARPA Economic Development group had regarding next steps and what FEMA's role would be regarding economic recovery for the planning group.

COVID-19 Cases in Long-Term Care (LTC) Facilities (as of 11/19)	
Residents/Healthcare Workers of LTC Facilities	**26,691**
LTC Facilities Reporting at Least One Case of COVID-19	**398**
Deaths Reported in LTC Facilities	**6,645**



COVID-19 RESPONSE COMMAND CENTER
WEEKLY SITUATION REPORT

Holyoke Soldiers' Home Weekly Update (current as of 11/17/20)

- In addition to sharing the Veterans Day virtual ceremony, the Soldiers' Home in Holyoke celebrated Veterans Day with special gifts, treats, music, as well as streaming the 2020 Veterans Day Virtual Ceremony on the Homes closed circuit television. The Home was also open for an additional day of visitation on Sunday, November 15, 2020, due to visitation being closed on Veterans Day.
- The Soldiers' Home in Holyoke resumed indoor visitation on Saturday, November 14, after receiving negative results from two rounds of testing for Veterans and staff.
    - Screening of all visitors will continue, including taking the temperature or each visitor and asking a series of questions. Two visitors are allowed per visit, and visitation will take place in the Home's lobby in four separate private areas with 16 slots available each day, Tuesday through Saturday, from 10:00am to 2:30pm.
    - Families and loved ones can schedule visits with veterans in advance using the Family Line at 413-552-4764.
    - Visitation is occurring in addition to continued video visits for regular family communication through video chat, and the Family Line is available for ad hoc updates with support from social work and clinical staff. Outdoor visits and video visits can be scheduled by calling the Family Line at 413-552-4764 Monday - Friday 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. 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.
- Per protocol, visitation on one unit at the Home has been temporarily suspended as a clinical staff member was notified that they were a close contact of a confirmed case.
    - All Veterans and Family members on the affected unit are being notified. Visits for the unit are suspended until further notice.
    - The exposure occurred offsite. The staff member was sent home immediately. The staff member is asymptomatic and has tested negative.
- Phase II of the Refresh Project to enhance residential units, an important initiative to ensure infection control continues to be met and that care areas are clean, safe, and comfortable, began for the second floor on Monday, October 19. Phase I of the Refresh Project is complete and the veterans from the second floor have successfully and safely moved to their new rooms on the third floor.
- 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 leadership is moving into the Transition & Rebuilding Phase that is focused on rebuilding staff leadership and team and positioning the facility to move forward safely. Over the past weeks, the Home welcomed new permanent leadership and staff positions including a Nurse Practitioner, two Recreational Therapists, and four Certified Nursing Assistants.
- Veteran and Family Advisory Council meetings are resuming. The Veterans Advisory council met on Thursday, November 12, 2020, and the Family Advisory Council will meet on Thursday, November 19, 2020. The Veteran and Family Advisory Councils are run by veterans and families with assistance from the Soldiers' Home.
    - The Advisory Council helps the Home partner with veterans and families to provide constructive guidance amongst diverse perspectives and lived experiences.
    - Through the feedback from the Veterans and Family Council, the Soldiers' Home in Holyoke hopes to integrate ideas into service delivery and quality improvement efforts to positively impact family and veteran-centered care.
- 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 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. The CDC recommends making medical decisions regarding when to end isolation and determine that the patient has recovered based on symptoms and time elapsed.
    - Since the start of the pandemic, more than 80 residents had been determined clinically recovered, which means that they at one point tested positive for COVID-19 but are now considered clinically recovered as defined by federal CDC guidance.
- On Veterans Day, the Baker-Polito Administration announced the next steps for the expedited capital project for the Soldiers' Home in Holyoke. Following the conclusion of the 12-week Rapid Planning Phase of the project, the Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance released the needs assessment report and announced the selection of a vendor for the next phase.
    - The Rapid Planning Phase was launched in August to identify a sustainable, public health, implementation roadmap to provide significant upgrades to the Soldiers' Home in Holyoke. The architecture firm that led this project, Payette, wrote a report detailing its findings and recommended next steps. This report represents the culmination of research gathered by a broad group of veterans, families, veterans' organizations, the community, and other stakeholders through focus groups, interviews, and surveys. These recommendations reflect the learnings from those engagements, and the analysis of demographic data and services in Western Massachusetts. Read the full report here.
    - Payette has been conditionally selected pending execution of a contract as the design firm to lead the design and planning phase, the next step of the expedited capital project. Payette will build on the evaluation they previously completed, and will develop a full project scope, refine the plan, and confirm the budget, timelines, and ensure conformity with the regulatory process. One of the early deliverables is the preparation of the submission for the VA State Home Construction Grant by its April 15, 2021 deadline.
    - The website for the project is www.mass.gov/HolyokeSHProject.
- In June, the Baker-Polito Administration released the independent report ordered by Governor Baker to investigate the COVID-19 outbreak at Holyoke Soldiers' Home, and announced a series of reforms to strengthen its governance and oversight of the Home, improving staffing processes, providing quality care for our Veterans, and planning for significant capital improvements.
- The status of all residents as of November 17 is as follows:
    - Status:
        - 0 positive and not clinically recovered
        - 56 veterans are negative
        - 1 resident have a pending test
        - 73 residents have been determined clinically recovered
        - 1 resident has refused testing
    - Resident locations:
        - 102 veterans are onsite
        - 29 veterans are offsite
            - 22 veterans are at a dedicated skilled nursing unit at Holyoke Medical Center
            - 7 veterans are receiving acute care offsite

COVID-19 RESPONSE COMMAND CENTER
WEEKLY SITUATION REPORT

Since March 1, there have been 76 veteran deaths of veterans who tested positive
From the most recent round of staff surveillance testing
0 tested positive
All others who previously tested positive are clinically recovered

Chelsea Soldiers' Home Weekly Update (current as of 11/17/20)

- In addition to sharing the Veterans Day virtual ceremony, the Soldiers' Home in Chelsea celebrated Veterans Day with a virtual message from Rear Admiral Michael Wettlaufer, Commander of the Military Sealift Command. Additionally, donated Commemorative Vietnam Books were distributed to residents, and other donated gifts were given to residents in Independent Living.
- Long Term Care veterans have moved into their new private spaces following the completion of a short-term ward conversation project at the Soldiers' Home in Chelsea to enhance infection control and resident safety. This project will also incorporate negative air pressure to improve airflow, which will be utilized until the opening of the Community Living Center (Fall 2022). The Home has released a live link for families and staff to virtually tour newly designed private spaces for veteran residents in the Long Term Care: Click here to view a virtual tour of these areas.
- Visitation at the Soldiers' Home in Chelsea continues between veterans and loved ones. Following visitation guidance, the Home's protocols prioritize the health and safety of Veterans and staff, with continued focus on infection control. Ongoing plans are contingent on the continued stability of infection controls and public health metrics, which we continue to monitor daily and coordinate with state and local health officials.
    - Families can also request updates on their loved ones by contacting the Home at CSH@mass.gov and through phone and video conversations. Medical information can only be shared with an authorized health care proxy.
- 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.
    - Since the start of the pandemic, more than 40 residents had been determined clinically recovered, which means that they at one point tested positive for COVID-19 but are now considered clinically recovered as defined by federal CDC guidance.
    - Individuals are determined recovered according to CDC guidance, and may test positive even after being clinically recovered. This is a known consequence of the PCR test, which is extremely sensitive to picking up virus or viral remnants even weeks after recovery.
- The Soldiers' Home in Chelsea currently conducts bi-weekly staff surveillance testing. In accordance with the recent CMS Interim Rule, 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.
- The status as of November 17 is as follows:
    - Residents
        - 0 veteran residents are positive
        - 143 veteran residents are negative
        - 40 residents have recovered, meaning they previously tested positive and are now clinically recovered

        - 0 residents have pending tests
        - Since March 1, there have been 31 deaths of veterans who tested positive
    - Following the most recent round of staff surveillance testing:
        - 1 employee is positive
        - All other employees who previously tested positive have been determined clinically recovered

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 map 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**.

COVID-19 RESPONSE COMMAND CENTER
WEEKLY SITUATION REPORT

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:
- 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.

Communications Resources

Public Information Resources on Targeted Health Measures Available for Communities:
The COVID-19 Command Center has produced new resources aimed at helping communities to inform and educate residents on recent executive orders and tips for less risky Thanksgiving gatherings.

New Website: Mass.gov/holidays

Executive Orders + Stay at Home Advisory one-pagers/flyers

- Available in multiple languages at the links below:
  - Public gathering guidance
  - Private gathering guidance
  - Face Mask order
  - Stay-at-home Advisory
  - Early business closure & alcohol guidance

- **Social Media posts on Thanksgiving Tips**
  - https://www.facebook.com/massgov/posts/1728164364021213
  - https://www.instagram.com/p/CHQSE5Egi4B/
  - https://twitter.com/MassGov/status/1324736982275313664
  - https://nextdoor.com/post/167003750?init_source=copy_link_share

Public Messaging Resources for Higher-Risk Communities

- Public messaging graphics & guidelines for use in your community

DPH Communication Materials in Multiple Languages

- **Facts Sheets**
- **Videos**

How to Help Out

- Donate to the Massachusetts COVID-19 Relief Fund.
- Volunteer opportunities for health professionals: **Please click here**.

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 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