Thursday, October 22, 2020

COVID-19 Command Center

Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency

Situation Update

The Command Center Situation Report is published weekly on Thursdays.



The Baker-Polito Administration launched a new free testing site in Revere this week. The Stop the Spread site is open to all residents of the Commonwealth and is run in partnership with Project Beacon and medical care partner, PhysicianOne Urgent Care, will be able to test 1,000 residents per day at full capacity.

In This Week's Report:

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  - Commonwealth to support Salem with Halloween Safety Restrictions
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  - DPH, Emergency Management, and Disaster Recovery Updates
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Helpful Links:

- Mass.gov/findfoodhelp
- Stop the Spread
- 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 10/22

143,927 Total Confirmed Cases (click here for more information)

9,589 Deaths among confirmed cases

2,580,213 individuals tested for the virus to date by MA State Public Health Laboratory, hospitals and commercial laboratories.

United States Last Updated 10/21

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:

8,312,667 Total Cases

221,438 Deaths

55 Jurisdictions Reporting Cases (50 states, D.C., Puerto Rico, Guam, Northern Marianas, 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:

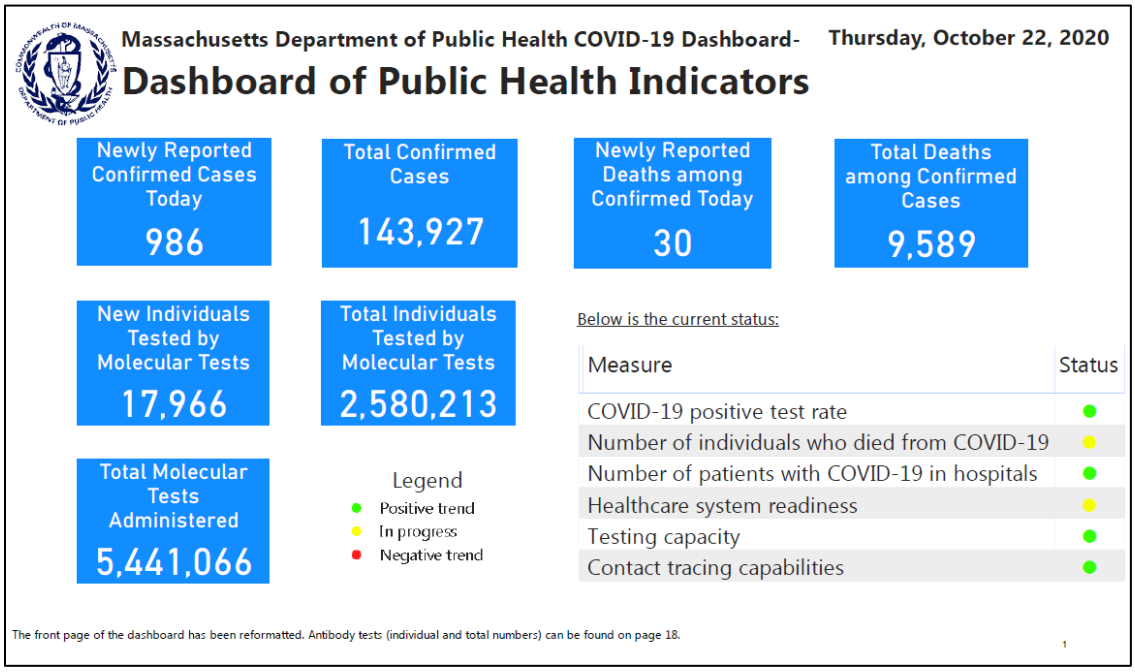
- ✓ Avoid crowds
- ✓ Stay 6 feet away from others
- ✓ Don't shake hands or hug
- ✓ Wear a face covering or mask if physical distancing is not possible.

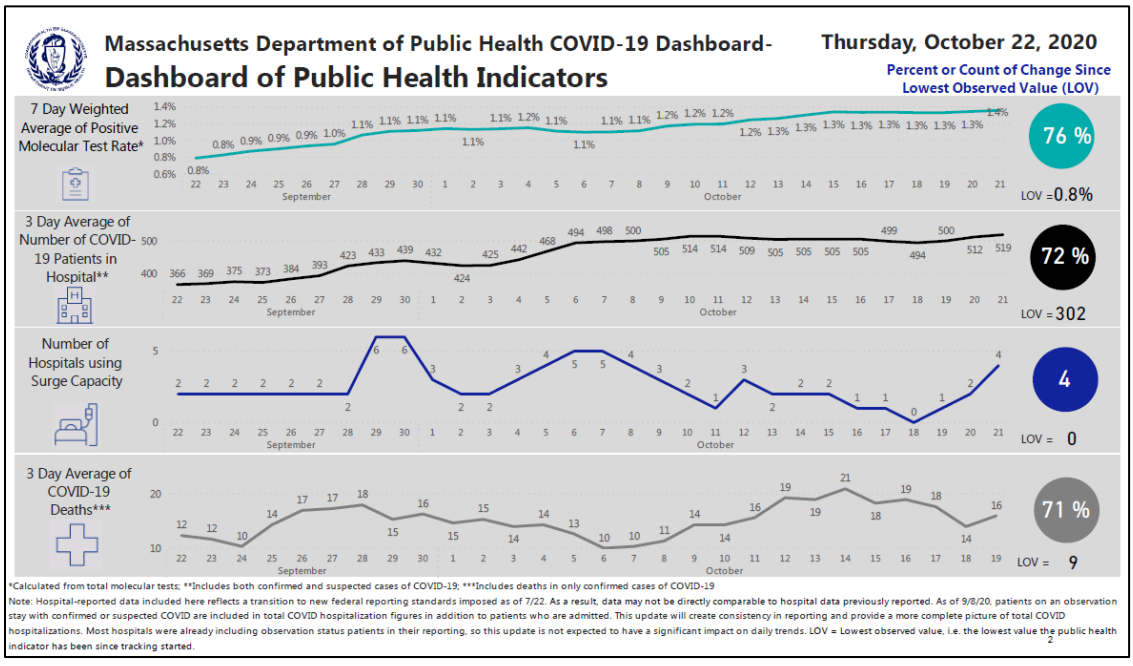
COVID-19 RESPONSE COMMAND CENTER
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Latest Data: COVID-19 Public Health Update

***Testing Update**:*
Today, over **17,000** new individuals tested by molecular (viral) tests were reported in Massachusetts with **986** newly reported confirmed positive cases. The total molecular tests administered to date is over **5.4 million**.

***Hospitalizations & Capacity Update**:* As of today, **521** people are hospitalized, with **103** 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

Changes to the Weekly Public Health Data Report

Over the past several months, the Command Center has continued to enhance the COVID-19 data, public reporting, and analysis, which enables a more targeted approach to providing guidance. The Command Center is continuously refining, enhancing and adding to this public data, some of the most comprehensive in the nation, to further strengthen the information and analysis we provide to local communities to guide their decisions.

Effective today, **with the Thursday, 10/22 weekly report**, the Command Center will identify if a municipality's positive cases have been significantly impacted by a clearly identified cluster in a long-term care facility, higher education institution or correctional facility. To accommodate this added analysis, **the weekly map and public health report will be published on Thursdays moving forward**.

Specifically, the municipality's risk level color will be identified with an asterisk if one of these identified institutions has more than 10 cases and results in 30% of their total cases over the past 14 days. Adding this identification acknowledges the impact of a particular institution or facility on the community's case count and provides valuable information for residents and municipal leaders to consider when implementing policies in their community.

These municipalities will remain in their red or yellow category. As a reminder, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's guidance calls for districts to monitor three weeks of reports before making changes to learning plans for schools. In addition, districts, and schools currently open for in-person instruction are encouraged to remain open even if their local community is designated as red, so long as there is no evidence of COVID-19 transmission in the schools.

An asterisk will not change a community's advancement forward or backward for Step 2 Phase 3, or its treatment under rules regulating gatherings.

Week in Review: State Actions

Baker-Polito Administration Announces Partnerships for Recovery, $774 Million Economic Recovery



Today, the Baker-Polito Administration announced a $774 million comprehensive plan to stabilize and grow the Massachusetts economy. The plan focuses on getting people back to work, supporting small businesses, fostering innovation, revitalizing downtowns and ensuring housing stability. Partnerships for Recovery begins today by directing $115 million in new funding to small businesses and Main Streets hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic and for workforce training efforts. Additionally, the Administration is aligning multiple funding sources, both existing and proposed, to appropriately respond to the crisis.

Partnerships for Recovery supports five key recovery efforts:

- **Getting Massachusetts back to work**
- **Supporting small businesses**
- **Revitalizing downtowns**
- **Supporting housing equity and stability**
- **Fostering innovation**

Governor Charlie Baker, Lt. Governor Karyn Polito, Housing and Economic Development Secretary Mike Kennealy, Labor and Workforce Secretary Rosalin Acosta, and Administration and Finance Secretary Michael J.

Heffernan joined Joe Kriesberg, President and CEO of the Massachusetts Association of Community Development Corporations to announce the plan at the Gardner Auditorium.

"This plan represents a comprehensive strategy to get people back to work and to support the small businesses hit the hardest by the pandemic, putting the Commonwealth on a path to recovery," **said Governor Charlie Baker.** "By leveraging existing tools and programs and implementing new ones this plan will allow us to make critical resources and assistance to those who need it most available now."

"While we continue to combat this pandemic, this plan takes an approach that addresses key needs of the businesses in downtowns and main streets, provides housing support for vulnerable families, and opens new doors for people seeking to return to work," **said Lt. Governor Karyn Polito.** "While we acknowledge we still have a ways to go, this plan will help to jumpstart our innovation economy and position Massachusetts to be on a path for success."

- Putting $115 million to work right away for small businesses and workforce training, including more than $25 million to get people back to work;
- Directing $323 million in existing capital programs as part of the response to continue doing more of what works;
- Filing for $122 million through the Revised H.2 budget to supplement existing funding in support of struggling Main Street businesses and skill building for residents;
- Steering $43 million in Federal, trust and other state funding toward our most critical needs; and
- Committing $171 million to keep people safely housed during the pandemic.

Getting People Back to Work

In order to get people back to work, new investments are being made to build workforce skills, growing training programs and pathways, forging new partnerships between employers and workers, and supporting internet connectivity to facilitate remote work and online career advancement. The more than $25 million available now includes:

- $10.4 million to engage Massachusetts employers by expanding workforce partnerships with large employers in target sectors to create aligned statewide training-employment pathways;
- $9.2 million to subsidize internet for low-income populations, and to expand hot spots in unserved and underserved communities;
- $3.2 million to modernize MassHire virtual pathways to assess and connect UI claimants to appropriate services and supports;
- $2 million to bolster manufacturing training by purchasing a standardized virtual training program to increase workforce for the manufacturing sector; and
- $300,000 to supplement $8.4 million toward Career Technical Institutes in H.2 to help close the skills gap for skilled technician jobs and align training to industry needs.

An additional $54 million is available to support workforce recovery efforts through existing programming such as the Skills Capital Grants program, the Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund, and the Workforce Training Trust Fund.

Revised House 2 also proposes $17.9 million in workforce funding, including $8.4 million in funding to transform vocational high schools into Career Technical Institutes running three shifts per day. This initiative is designed to train 20,000 new workers over four years in skilled trades and technical fields including plumbing, HVAC, manufacturing, and robotics. This will consist of a combination of enrolling more high school students in high-

impact vocational trade programs and expanding capacity for adults to earn industry-based credentials, aligned to apprenticeships and post-secondary degrees.

"These funds will provide critical re-employment services to our workforce, helping people make the transition from unemployment benefits to good paying jobs in some of the Commonwealth's key long term job growth sectors," **said Secretary of Labor and Workforce Development Rosalin Acosta.**

Direct Support to Small Business and Main Street

To generate economic growth amidst the COVID-19 pandemic and support Main Streets across Massachusetts, the Administration is investing $322.8 million in direct support of small and diverse businesses and local communities. This funding includes grants (see details below) to the hardest hit small businesses, especially small businesses owned by women, minorities, veterans, or members of other underrepresented groups. These grant awards will allow small businesses to cover expenses such as rent, payroll, and utilities as they get back on their feet. Additional funding will support small businesses through hands-on and personalized technical assistance, including targeted support for women- and minority-owned businesses around digital and online technology as their business model pivots away from a brick-and-mortar location.

Many communities have seen their Main Streets and downtown districts hit particularly hard by the pandemic, and new funding aims to help cities and towns plan for short-term innovations and long-term recovery. A new $10 million round of the Shared Streets and Spaces Grant Program will continue to help cities and towns quickly implement or expand improvements to sidewalks, curbs, streets, on-street parking spaces and off-street parking lots in support of public health, safe mobility, and renewed commerce in their communities. Separately, local recovery planning grants will soon be available to cities and towns to assist with long-term planning for their business districts. A total of $10 million is available for this program.

To support the museums and other cultural facilities that have faced a particularly challenging reality this year but remain a cornerstone of what Massachusetts offers to visitors, these institutions will be eligible for $10 million in Cultural Facilities Operating Grants. This funding will help these organizations to make safety improvements and other upgrades to allow them to continue to offer their unique attractions and exhibits.

As part of this recovery plan, the Governor’s recently filed revised budget proposal recommends over $100 million in additional funding for economic recovery and development efforts, including $35 million for community development financial institutions (CDFI) grants and loans, and $15 million for matching grants for capital investments by businesses with 20 or fewer employees. Additionally, more than $115 million in existing capital through programs such as MassWorks, and those in the MassDevelopment portfolio (Brownfields Redevelopment Fund, Site Readiness Program, Transformative Development Initiative, and Collaborative Workspaces), will be leveraged in support of economic recovery. This recovery plan complements the Administration’s $275 million economic recovery package, which was announced in June.

Small Business and Main Street Highlights (new funding):

- $50.8 million in Small Business Grants to help the hardest hit businesses;
- $10 million to continue funding the Shared Streets and Spaces Program;
- $10 million for local recovery planning grants to support cities and towns;
- $10 million to support cultural facilities such as museums;
- $8.3 million in small business technical assistance to help businesses access grant programs and loans, as well as help build business management skills, resilience, and other support in navigating pandemic impacts;

- Including $2.3 million to provide personalized technical assistance to woman- and minority-owned businesses;

"Our current circumstances call for a plan with the size and scope to match the urgency we need to address the most pressing challenges we now face," **said Secretary of Housing and Economic Development Mike Kennealy.** "By targeting vital resources toward these key areas, this strategy will allow us to lay a solid foundation for our path to recovery."

"During this unprecedented public health emergency, the Baker-Polito Administration is continuing to invest significant resources to support recovery and growth initiatives for small businesses and Main Streets across Massachusetts," **said Secretary of Administration and Finance Michael J. Heffernan.** "Through close coordination with federal, state, and local partners – including our Legislative colleagues – we are proud to put forth a plan that thoughtfully invests funds from multiple sources to equip employers with the tools, resources, and supports to help navigate the new COVID-19 landscape."

"We greatly appreciate Governor Baker's sense of urgency to move these grant dollars now, while also working with the Legislature to secure additional funds in the state budget and the economic development bill," **said Joseph Kriesberg, President of the Massachusetts Association of Community Development Corporations and Board Member of the Massachusetts Growth Capital Corporation**. "Small business owners have sacrificed to help keep all of us safe and healthy. This initiative is our opportunity to have their back."

Additional Investments

In order to keep people safely in their homes during the pandemic and support small landlords with expenses, the Administration recently announced $171 million in support of the Eviction Diversion Initiative. This comprehensive strategy includes funding to help to cover housing costs such as rent and mortgage payments, invest in new programs around mediation and legal representation, and provide repaid rehousing when a tenant is evicted. Additionally, the Administration continues to invest in the Commonwealth's stock of affordable rental housing with $121 million in direct subsidies.

Massachusetts has long been a hotbed of innovation and creativity in science and technology, and sectors such as the life sciences and advanced manufacturing are not only critical to the innovation economy, but also continue to contribute to the response to the coronavirus. To ensure we continue to lead in this space, $62 million in existing capital funding through the Massachusetts Life Sciences Center, the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative, and MassVentures is available to support recovery and growth.

Small Business Grant Program Details

Massachusetts Growth Capital Corporation (MGCC) is administering the Small Business Grants program, with $50.8 million available beginning today. Grant awards range between $25,000 – $75,000, and eligibility criteria and applications are available here.

As part of this grant program, preference is given to small businesses whose owners are women, minorities, veterans, members of other underrepresented groups, or focused on serving the Gateway Cities of Massachusetts, who have been unable to open and those most adversely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Preference is also given to applicants that have not been able to receive aid from other federal programs, including PPP and other relief related to COVID-19.

The program has two distinct funding "doors" based on business size, with different eligibility criteria, which is available online. Applicants must review the information to determine which program to proceed with applying.

Administration Launches Express COVID-19 Free Testing Site in Revere

The Baker-Polito Administration has launched a new free testing site in Revere open to all residents of the Commonwealth. The Stop the Spread site, which is run in partnership with Project Beacon and medical care partner, PhysicianOne Urgent Care, will be able to test 1,000 residents per day at full capacity.



COVID-19 Testing
Testing for Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) is widely available in Massachusetts.
mass.gov

Tests must be scheduled in advance and will be performed using a self-swabbing method in a drive-through format. Walk-up testing is not available. Residents arriving for a scheduled test must remain in their car at all times during the testing process. Specimens will be processed by the Broad Institute.

Residents interested in scheduling a test must make an appointment online. Hours of operation are also available on the website. Testing appointments may be scheduled up to 10 days in advance.

The testing site is located across the street from the Shops at Suffolk Downs on Tomasello Way at 31 Furlong Drive in Revere, MA. The site can be accessed from either Revere Beach Parkway or Route 1A (William McClellan Parkway), but residents are recommended to access it from Route 1A to drive directly into the queue. In addition to the website, more information is available by calling 617-741-7310.

The Commonwealth currently has over 250 testing sites available, including free testing sites in 18 communities through the Stop the Spread Initiative. For a full list of testing sites in the Commonwealth, visit mass.gov/gettested.

Project Beacon is a social benefit organization focused on helping to increase the capacity, availability, accessibility and affordability of COVID-19 testing in Massachusetts. PhysicianOne Urgent Care is the medical care partner managing the clinical site and all medical aspects of testing.

Commonwealth to support the City of Salem with Halloween Safety Restrictions

On Wednesday, Governor Charlie Baker joined Salem Mayor Kim Driscoll and other local officials to announce details about planned safety closures and restrictions for Salem that will be in place for Halloween. Mayor Driscoll announced several steps the City is taking to limit the number of people visiting for Halloween festivities. The Baker-Polito Administration is supporting Salem's efforts through MBTA schedule changes over the next two weekends, and with law enforcement support if necessary from the Massachusetts State Police. Visit the City of Salem's website for complete details.



COVID-19 RESPONSE COMMAND CENTER
WEEKLY SITUATION REPORT

Important Updates

COVID-19 Enforcement and Intervention Team Update

The Command Center's COVID-19 Enforcement and Intervention Team (CEIT) has been working closely with local officials in communities that continue to see high rates of COVID. As part of CEIT's broader effort, the Commonwealth has ramped up public messaging in these communities, including through a multi-lingual public messaging campaign. Last Monday, as a new step, the Commonwealth activated a Wireless Emergency Alert through MEMA to cell phones in several high-risk communities – including Chelsea, Everett, Lawrence, Lynn, Nantucket, New Bedford, Revere, Framingham, Winthrop, and Worcester.



The alert system has been primarily used with local partners to alert residents to serious risks in their communities – like weather emergencies, law enforcement incidents, or Amber Alerts. COVID is persistently high risk in communities that received the alert, and the judicious use of this system is another important tool to remind residents to remain vigilant.

This alert is also far reaching—and goes to nearly all cell phones in the alerted area to make sure people are informed, even if they have not seen something on TV or in the newspaper.

This text alert contains a website link where folks can click to learn more about what they can do to stop the spread of COVID-19 and be safe.

This alert is part of the broader campaign by the Commonwealth to remind residents that COVID remains a serious risk and we all need to continue to take precautions to protect ourselves, our loved ones, and our community.

Residents are also encouraged to sign up to receive alerts specific to their communities as part of the newly expanded AlertsMA system by visiting mass.gov/stopcovid19. This opt-in system, which is different from Wireless Emergency Alerts, allows residents to choose how they would like to receive informational alerts from the Commonwealth by text, email, or phone, and in their preferred language.

COVID-19 Community Impact Survey available through Oct. 30

You can still participate in the Department of Public Health's COVID-19 Community Impact Survey through the end of this month. The survey, which has received responses from 22,000 participants so far, was developed to learn about the needs of residents throughout the Commonwealth, especially those disproportionately impacted by this public health crisis. Taking the survey will help DPH plan for appropriate resources and supports for residents as we continue to navigate the COVID-19 pandemic. The survey is available in multiple languages and takes only 10 to 15 minutes to complete. Residents of Massachusetts, 14 years of age or older, are encouraged to take the survey by visiting Mass.Gov/COVIDsurvey.



Additional Department of Public Health Updates:

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- Beginning with the Thursday, 10/22 weekly report, the Command Center will identify if a municipality's positive cases have been significantly impacted by a clearly identified cluster in a long-term care facility, higher education institution, or correctional facility. To accommodate this added analysis, the weekly map and public health report will be published on Thursdays moving forward.
- COVID-19 Community Impact Survey Dissemination Update, advised that DPH is extending the survey timeline to October 30th to collect additional responses and capture voices that typically go unheard. E-mail recipients were encouraged to take several actions to spread the work about the survey. The communication also advised that the survey has been translated into four additional languages (Arabic, Cape Verdean Creole, Khmer, and Russian). Translated materials in all 11 languages are available for download here: http://bit.ly/CCIS-Dissemination-Materials
- Carpooling Safely during COVID-19 - Flyers and Videos (available in several languages) and social media links: Next Door, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram
- On 10/20, DPH received 124,760 Abbott BinaxNOW™ COVID-19 Tests, which is the third shipment received from this HHS distribution of rapid point-of-care tests.
- MA211 received 2,825 calls from Wednesday 10/14 through Monday 10/19 for a new total of 130,735.
- DPH put up a new web page on Preparing for a COVID-19 Vaccine with a link to the Interim Draft Vaccination Plan submitted to CDC on October 16. Visit the site at www.mass.gov/COVIDvaccine.
- The DPH flu prevention public awareness campaign continues to receive amplification and support from public health and medical colleague organizations across the Commonwealth. The ads are on TV, highway billboards, transit station posters and buses, and across social media.



- For the date range of 10/09-10/15/2020, all 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. On 10/20/2020, DPH began collecting the new influenza-related questions that were added to the federal COVID-19 data set. The influenza-related questions are federally optional at this time but are expected to become mandatory within a few weeks.
- On October 20, 2020, DPH issued the revised Crisis Standards of Care Planning Guidance for the COVID-19 Pandemic. (Accessible version). This Guidance provides direction for the triage of critically ill patients if the public health emergency caused by the COVID-19 pandemic creates a demand for in-patient critical care resources that outstrips supply. It seeks to ensure that every patient has equitable access to care from which they might benefit, and that tragically difficult decisions

Emergency Management and Disaster Recovery Updates:

Mass Care

- 1 state contracted quarantine/isolation hotel in the city of Everett continues to receive client placements.
    - Currently 26 residents are housed in this hotel (+14 change since last Thursday)
    - To date, a total of **700 residents** have been placed in this hotel for safe quarantine and isolation.

Logistics (including Personal Protective Equipment and Supplies)

- 42 orders prepare for pick up or delivery between 10/16/2020 and 10/22/2020.
- Mission to ensure PPE allocations were distributed to identified COVID test sites was completed on Tuesday, 10/20/2020. 2,074,000 KN-95 and 208,800 Informational Flyers were distributed in support of this program between 10/6/2020 and 10/20/2020.

- Eight CEIT locations were provided with alcohol-based hand wipes, masks, and sanitizer stands throughout the week. 88,000 KN-95, 238 Sanitizer Stations, and 22,680 packages of alcohol-based hand wipes were distributed. This mission will continue a biweekly basis through the end of the year, working with the Command Center.
- DPH coordinated 8 deliveries to health care entities on Tuesday (10/20) (1 PPE/7 testing supplies), and 16 deliveries have been scheduled for Friday (10/23) (4 PPE/11 testing supplies/1 surplus biohazards bags).

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:

- Total amount in FEMA's Grant Portal System: $ 177,654,578
- Total FEMA RPA Applicants: 639 (+7)
- Total amount in FEMA's Grant Portal System: $ 177,654,578
- Total # Obligated Projects: 31 / +$ 7,805,950.48 (+0 / +$0)
- Total # of Payments Disbursed: 25 / $ 6,906,137.27 (+ 4/ +$ 39,481.64)
- Total # of Partial Payments Disbursed: 2 / $ 320,113.59 (+1 / +$ 29,876.53)
- Online Applicant Technical Assistant Requests: 463 (+6)
- The October 15 deadline resulted in over 361 new project submittals. MEMA continues to review these projects as expeditiously as possible and transmit to FEMA. So far, MEMA has issued over 150 Requests for Information to applicants to gather additional information needed for project formulation.
- Economic Development Planners group met with MEMA, EOHED, State Economic Development Districts and other agencies met to discuss challenges for small businesses related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Monthly meetings will commence, and the group will coordinate with SBA's regional office to address gaps in funding.
- FEMA and HUD announced new "Implementation Guidance for Use of Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery Funds as Non-Federal Cost Share for the Public Assistance Program." This guidance introduces the concept of "flexible match" to satisfy the local match requirement.

COVID-19 Cases in Long-Term Care (LTC) Facilities (as of 10/22)	
Residents/Healthcare Workers of LTC Facilities	**25,428**
LTC Facilities Reporting at Least One Case of COVID-19	**390**
Deaths Reported in LTC Facilities	**6,314**



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Holyoke Soldiers' Home Weekly Update (current as of 10/22/20)

Note: The Executive Office of Health and Human Services is requiring mandatory COVID-19 testing for public employees at state operated 24/7 facilities, hospitals and congregate care settings beginning Wednesday, September 23. Until there is a safe and effective vaccine for COVID-19, surveillance testing will remain critically important for the safety of staff and residents.

- We are happy to report that Phase I 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 is complete. The veterans that were on the second floor have successfully and safely moved to their new rooms on the third floor. Phase II of the Refresh Project started on Monday, October 19.
- 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 the 7 new permanent leadership and staff positions including a Chief Operating Officer, Assistant Director of Nursing, an Occupation Health Nurse, and more.
- The health of all veteran residents of the Soldiers' Home in Holyoke is being constantly monitored. Regular surveillance and diagnostic testing are routine and ongoing for veterans and surveillance testing for staff.
- This weekend, three clinically recovered veterans had symptoms similar to COVID-19, and per current infection control protocol, they were immediately isolated and tested, and out of an abundance of caution visitation has been temporarily suspended. All veterans who exhibited symptoms similar to COVID-19 have since tested negative.
    - The Home immediately implemented enhanced precautions in the unit and throughout the Home, in addition to the continuation of strict infection control protocols to keep veteran residents and staff safe.
    - Clinically recovered individuals may test positive even after they are clinically recovered. The Soldiers' Home is taking every precaution to ensure a safe environment for our veterans and staff throughout the facility.
- Visitation is temporarily suspended per infection control protocol to protect the health and safety of veteran residents and loved ones, as the visitation plan is contingent on the continued stability of infection control and public health metrics. Families and loved ones will be notified when it is safe to resume visitation.
    - During this time, we encourage loved ones to schedule video visits for regular family communication, and the Family Line is available for ad hoc updates with support from social work and clinical staff. 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.
    - Please note the Soldiers' Home can only share medical information about a resident with the authorized health care proxy on file.
- 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 Holyoke Soldiers' Home 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.
- The Baker-Polito Administration is in the midst of the expedited capital project to reimagine the future of the Soldiers' Home in Holyoke, led by architecture firm Payette. The project team is actively gathering input from a broad community of stakeholders as part of the Rapid Planning Phase, in addition to working on the needs assessment, the clinical options, and the facility's infrastructure. This work will inform the development of the implementation plan to meet the April 15, 2021 federal Veterans' Affairs' State Home Construction Grant application deadline.
    - The team launched a website for the project, www.mass.gov/HolyokeSHProject, and an online survey to gather input: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/WCX32P2
- 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 as of October 20 is as follows:
    - The status of all residents:
        - 0 positive and not clinically recovered
        - 37 veterans are negative
        - 45 residents have a pending test
        - 51 residents have been determined clinically recovered
        - 1 resident has refused testing
    - Resident locations:
        - 109 veterans are onsite
        - 25 veterans are offsite
            - 23 veterans are at a dedicated skilled nursing unit at Holyoke Medical Center
            - 2 veterans are receiving acute care offsite
    - 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 10/22/20)

- Over the weekend Long Term Care Veterans began moving into their new private spaces. Additionally, the Soldiers' Home in Chelsea has released a live link for families and staff to virtually tour newly designed private spaces for veteran residents in the Long Term Care. 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). Click here to view a virtual tour of these areas.
- The Chelsea Soldiers' Home has resumed visitation between veterans and loved ones on October 15. 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 October 20 is as follows:
    - Residents
        - 0 veteran residents are positive
        - 144 veteran residents are negative
        - 42 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:
        - 2 employees are 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. MassSupport provides:

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 Public Resources Map

MEMA, together with MA VOAD and other partners, has developed a COVID-19 Public Resources Map showing the location of resources available to the public, such as food banks, houses of worship, and Project Bread site locations. Please note that this map is not inclusive of all resources and is only as accurate as the information that has been provided to MEMA.

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:
- 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 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