

**Thursday, October 29, 2020**  
**COVID-19 Command Center**  
**Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency**

## **Situation Update**

*The Command Center Situation Report is published weekly on Thursdays.*



### **In This Week's Report:**

- Latest Data: New Cluster Data Included in Weekly Public Health Report
- Week in Review: Key State Actions
  - Administration Awards Additional \$5.9 Million for Food Security
  - Tips for a Safe and Healthy Thanksgiving
  - Website Launched to Help Parents Support Children's Mental Health
  - ICYMI: Temporary Pause for Indoor Ice Hockey and Ice-Skating Facility Operations
  - In-person Voting Safety Tips
  - DPH, Emergency Management, and Disaster Recovery Updates
  - Holyoke and Chelsea Soldiers' Homes Weekly Update

### **Helpful Links:**

- [Mass.gov/findfoodhelp](https://www.mass.gov/findfoodhelp)
- [Stop the Spread](https://www.mass.gov/stopthespread)
- [HandHoldMA.org](https://www.handholdma.org)
- [Reopening Massachusetts](https://www.mass.gov/reopening)
- [Mass.Gov/covid19](https://www.mass.gov/covid19)
- [Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency](https://www.mass.gov/emergency-management)
- [Unemployment & COVID-19](https://www.mass.gov/unemployment)
- [Dept. Of Transitional Assistance Online Portal](https://www.mass.gov/dept-of-transitional-assistance)
- [Emergency Childcare Site](https://www.mass.gov/emergency-childcare)
- [COVID-19 Cost Eligibility and Tracking Guidance](https://www.mass.gov/covid-19-cost-eligibility)



## **Situation in Numbers**

**Massachusetts current as of 10/29**

151,741 Total Confirmed Cases ([click here for more information](#))

9,727 Deaths among confirmed cases

2,702,953 individuals tested for the virus to date by MA State Public Health Laboratory, hospitals, and commercial laboratories.

## **United States Last Updated 10/29**

*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:**

8,834,393 Total Cases

227,045 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.

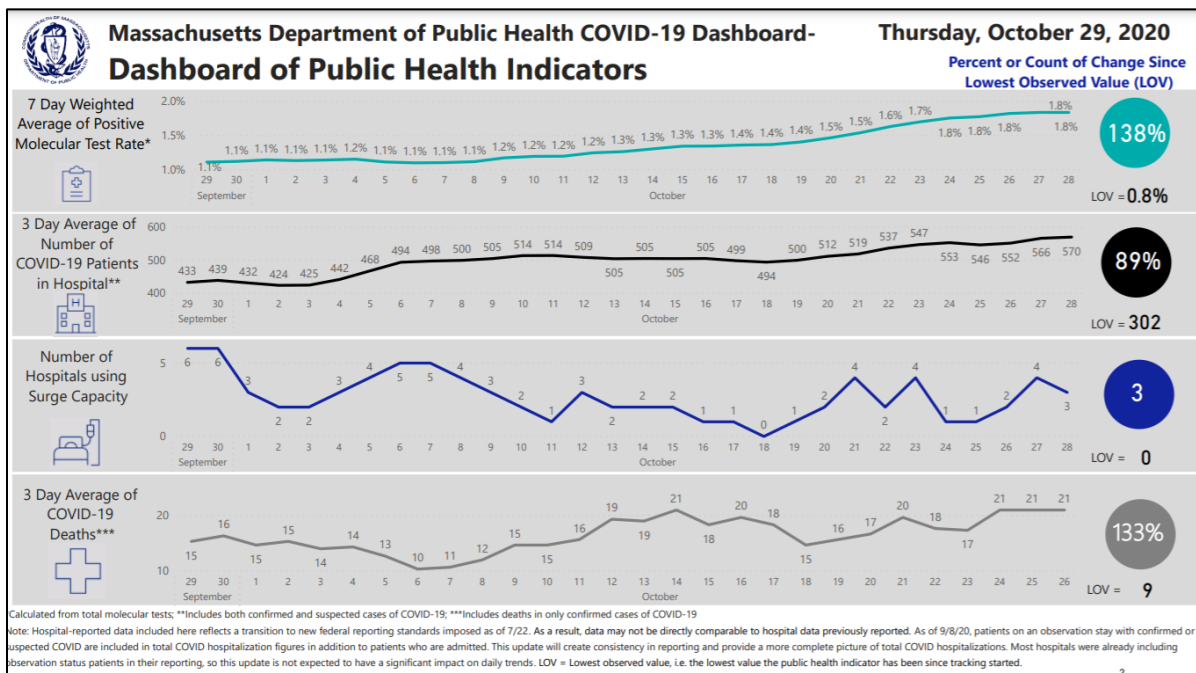
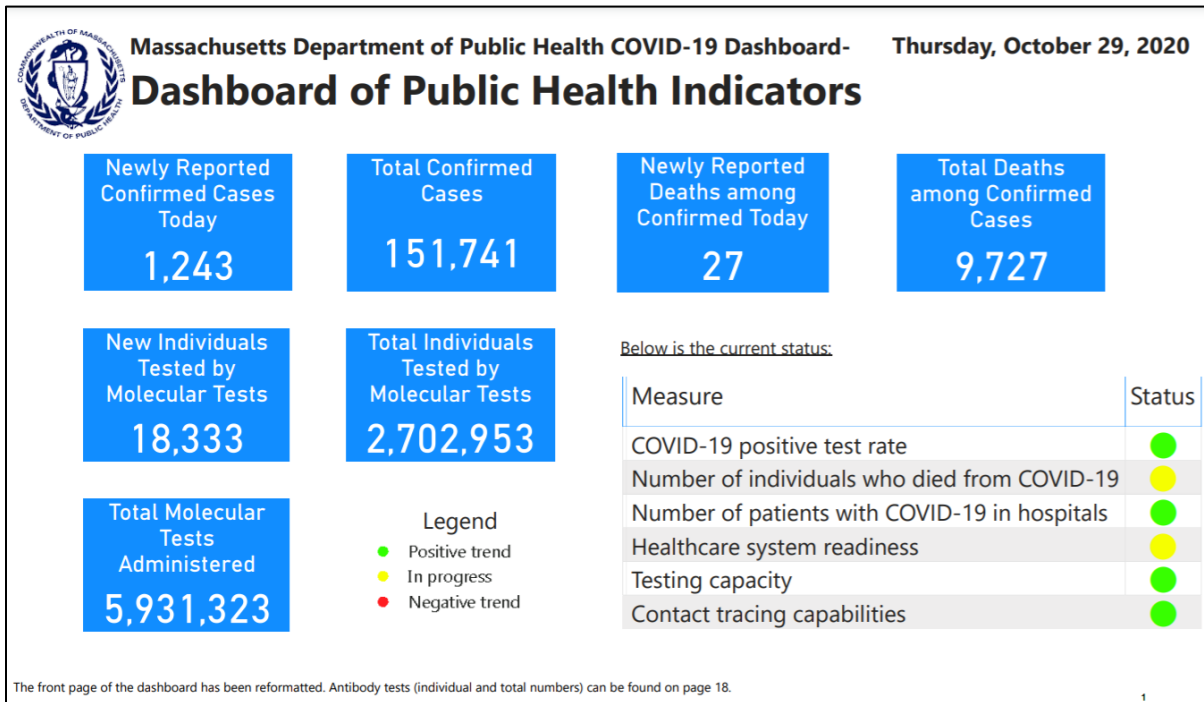
COVID-19 RESPONSE COMMAND CENTER  
WEEKLY SITUATION REPORT

## Latest Data: COVID-19 Public Health Update

### Testing Update:

Today, over **18,000** new individuals tested by molecular (viral) tests were reported in Massachusetts with **1,243** newly reported confirmed positive cases. The total molecular tests administered to date is over **5.9 million**.

**Hospitalizations & Capacity Update:** As of today, **561** people are hospitalized, with **99** 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

### **Updates on the Weekly Public Health Report:**

Each week, in the Department of Public Health's weekly public health report, 351 cities and towns in the Commonwealth are given a risk designation based on their average daily case rate per 100,000 residents over the last two weeks. The designation for all communities is available beginning [on page 3 this week's edition of the report](#). 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, their 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 the municipality's 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.

### **Clusters**

In this week's Public Health Report, the Department is also including information on the number of cases and contacts associated with clusters of infection in certain settings. ([You can find the cluster information beginning on page 36 of the report.](#)) Massachusetts is one of only a handful of states reporting cluster information in particular settings, including households, organized sports, retail settings and social gatherings. Clusters are created when at least 2 cases are associated with the same location. This information will be included on a weekly basis and is useful to help understand where people are getting infected.

### **Phase III Updates**

Based on updates included in today's data, several communities must revert to Step 1 of Phase 3 of the Commonwealth's reopening plan as outlined in COVID-19 [order 51](#). The order specifies that a community must revert to Step 1 of Phase 3 if they are designated in the "red" category for three consecutive weekly DPH weekly reports. Effective Monday, November 2, businesses in those communities must comply with the Step 1, Phase 3 requirements. More details and the list of communities will be available [here](#).

## ***Week in Review: State Actions***

### **Administration Awards an Additional \$5.9 million for Food Security**

Continuing its ongoing efforts to support a resilient, secure local food supply chain in Massachusetts, the Baker-Polito Administration today announced \$5.9 million in grants to address urgent food insecurity for residents across the Commonwealth as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. This funding is being awarded as part of the fourth round of the new \$36 million Food Security Infrastructure Grant Program, created following recommendations from the Administration's COVID-19 Command Center's Food Security Task Force, which promotes ongoing efforts to ensure



## COVID-19 RESPONSE COMMAND CENTER WEEKLY SITUATION REPORT

that individuals and families throughout the Commonwealth have access to healthy, local food.

The goal of the Food Security Infrastructure Grant Program is to ensure that individuals and families throughout the Commonwealth have equitable access to food, especially local food. The program also seeks to ensure that farmers, fishermen and other local food producers are better connected to a strong, resilient food system to help mitigate future food supply and distribution disruption.

See the news release for [a list of awardees of the 4th round the Food Security Infrastructure Grants](#)

### **Tips for a Safe and Healthy Thanksgiving**

Traveling and gathering with family and friends for Thanksgiving will look different this year to keep loved ones safe from COVID-19. The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) today provided guidance for holiday celebrations to help limit the risk of exposure to COVID-19 and reduce the spread of the virus.

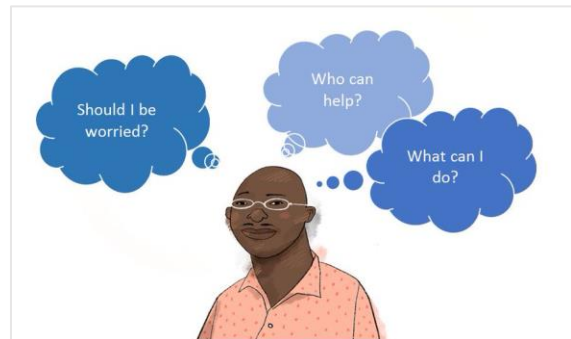


As part of the guidance, DPH reminds residents and communities to be aware that gatherings and events are subject to the current state [gathering size limits](#) as well as applicable [sector-specific workplace safety standards](#). Thanksgiving weekend is traditionally one of the busiest travel holidays of the year and anyone considering travel should be aware of and follow the [Massachusetts COVID-19 Travel Order](#).

See the DPH [Tips for a Safe and Healthy Thanksgiving](#)

### **New Website Launched to Help Parents Support their Children's Mental Health**

Recognizing the impact the COVID-19 pandemic is having on children's mental health, the Office of the Child Advocate (OCA) joined forces with the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) and the Department of Mental Health (DMH) to launch [HandholdMA.org](#), a new family-friendly website for parents and guardians of school-aged children who are concerned about their child's mental health.



[HandholdMA.org](#) provides families with tips, tools, and resources designed to help them navigate their child's mental health journey with confidence. The content, which is targeted to families with kids age 6-12 years, was developed by a team of mental health and child development experts as well as family and community partners. A creative team from IDEO Cambridge designed the user experience and branding.

Read the [EOHHS News Release for More Information](#).

### **ICYMI: Temporary Pause for All Indoor Ice Hockey and Ice Skating Facility Operations**

Last week, due to rising cases of COVID-19 connected to indoor ice hockey, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health issued a new public health order today prohibiting indoor ice rinks and ice skating facilities from operating from October 23, 2020 to November 7, 2020. This order is in response to multiple COVID-19 clusters



## COVID-19 RESPONSE COMMAND CENTER WEEKLY SITUATION REPORT

occurring at rinks throughout the state following games, practices, and tournaments. Neighboring states including New Hampshire have enacted similar temporary restrictions regarding indoor ice hockey.

Read the DPH [news release for more information](#).

### **In-Person Voting Safety Tips**

With Election Day right around the corner, communities throughout the Commonwealth have prepared for months to make in-person voting as safe as possible during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Massachusetts Secretary of State's Office describes the steps and the precautions being taken this year for in-person voting on [page 14 and 15 of the 2020 MA Voters Guide](#). Mass. DPH urges following the usual safety protocols in public places and the CDC has [also issued tips for healthy voting](#), including:

- Wearing a mask
- Bringing your own supplies, such as a pen, extra mask, and hand sanitizer
- Protecting yourself when driving with others to the polling place ([see this new video on safe carpooling](#))
- Cleaning your hands
- Keeping a safe distance from others



## ***Important Updates***

### **Department of Public Health Updates:**

- DPH now publishes the [COVID-19 Weekly Public Health Report](#) on Thursdays, and will include new information on case clusters this week. Find the daily dashboard and weekly report [here](#).
  - Prior to October 22nd the Weekly Report was published each Wednesday. Due to this change, the County Level Positivity Rates – which are used to determine whether long-term care facilities need to test a sample of staff or all staff – will now also be posted separately on Wednesdays. The County Level Positivity Rates may be accessed under the "County-Level COVID-19 Data Reporting" heading below the [Weekly Report](#).
- [Carpooling Safely during COVID-19](#) videos were shared on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).
- On 10/26, DPH received 88,360 Abbott BinaxNOW™ COVID-19 Tests, which is the fourth shipment received from this HHS distribution of rapid point-of-care tests.
- There were 6 deliveries to health care entities on Tuesday (10/27) (3 PPE/4 testing supplies – 1 facility requested both), and 11 deliveries have been scheduled for Friday (10/30) (7 PPE/5 testing supplies- 1 facility requested both).
- Mass 211 received 6,688 calls from Tuesday 10/20 through Tuesday 10/27 for a new total of 137,423.
- DPH issued a [memorandum](#) to Nursing Homes regarding the Resumption of Certified Nurse Aide (CNA) Testing. The DPH is authorizing its testing vendor, the American Red Cross (ARC), to resume Certified Nurse Aide (CNA) testing on or about December 1, 2020.
- DPH issued an [Advisory](#) to Licensed Ambulance Services regarding COVID-19 Workplace Safety Standards for Ambulance Service Locations.
- For the date range of 10/16-10/22, 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. This is the second week of full compliance.

# COVID-19 RESPONSE COMMAND CENTER

## WEEKLY SITUATION REPORT

### 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 47 residents are housed in this hotel (+26 change since last Thursday)
  - The hotel is currently at **43% occupancy**
  - To date, a total of 726 residents have been placed in this hotel for safe quarantine and isolation

#### Emergency Food Box Program

As the COVID-19 crisis continues, alarming indicators demonstrate the need for an Emergency Food Support Program. High-risk individuals, such as people over 65 or with certain underlying health conditions, are being disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 crisis. In addition to the specific public health concerns resulting from COVID-19, there continues to be a growing food security crisis demonstrated by a marked increase and atypical demand for feeding resources resulting from increased food insecurity.

In April 2020, the MA COVID-19 Command Center convened a Food Security Task Force representing state agencies, the legislature, and other key partners to:

- Identify immediate needs across all regions of the state, taking into account all of the unique needs, and propose rapid solutions for each challenge;
- Maximize access, enrollment, and participation in food assistance programs; and
- Assess challenges around accessibility to food product and propose initiatives to overcome, considering local farm needs and the “farm to fork” food supply chain.

Since then, the Food Security Task Force has been addressing immediate and urgent food access challenges facing communities in Massachusetts, helping to prop-up and enhance the infrastructure of existing food resources, and preparing the Commonwealth for sustainable and longer-term solutions. To support immediate food insecurity needs, MEMA has been charged with coordinating the Emergency Food Box Program. This program was established back in April to provide emergency food, in the form of shelf stable food boxes, to the Commonwealth’s four major food banks as a relief valve. While delivery of food boxes coming into the food banks have recently ceased due to the program coming to an end, any remaining food box inventory continues to be distributed. Below is an update on the program.

<b>Food Bank/ MEMA Warehouse</b>	<b>Total Number of Food Boxes Received to Date</b>	<b>Total Number of Food Boxes Distributed to Date</b>	<b>Total Number of Food Boxes Remaining in Inventory</b>
Food Bank of Western MA	31259	31259	0
Greater Boston Food Bank	206592	204096	2496
Merrimack Valley Food Bank	3312	3312	0
Worcester County Food Bank	1440	1421	19
MEMA Warehouse (Reserve)	37938	36869	1069
<b>Total Food Boxes</b>	<b>280,541</b>	<b>276,957</b>	<b>2,515</b>

#### **Logistics (including Personal Protective Equipment and Supplies)**

- 30 deliveries prepared for pick up or delivery between October 23 and October 29, 2020

## COVID-19 RESPONSE COMMAND CENTER WEEKLY SITUATION REPORT

- To support the COVID-19 Enforcement and Intervention Team (CEIT) Initiative, a total of 110,000 KN-95 were sent to six locations this week
- 775,500 youth sized cloth face masks were received from USHHS, to support cloth mask distribution to schools, following a plan developed by MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

### 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 FEMA RPA Applicants: 640 (+1)
- Total amount in FEMA's Grants Portal System: \$ 179,898,201.70
- Total # Obligated Projects: 31 / +\$ 7,805,950.48 (+0 / +\$0)
- Total # of Payments Disbursed: 25 / \$ 6,906,137.27 (+ 0 / +\$0)
- Total # of Partial Payments Disbursed: 2 / \$ 320,113.59 (+0 / +\$ 0)
- Online Applicant Technical Assistant Requests: 464 (+1)
- Continuing to provide technical assistance to project applicants.
- MEMA has reviewed all applicants' projects submitted from the October 15<sup>th</sup> deadline. Over 250 Requests for Information (RFIs) have been issued to applicants to gather additional documentation needed for project formulation.
- The RDU will submit MEMA's \$340,000,000 PPE PW to FEMA on Friday.
- The \$50,000,000 MEMA ACS PW is currently moving through the FEMA CRC review process.
- On Oct. 27, 2020 FEMA Responded and approved the 30-day extension for Emergency Feeding under major disaster declaration FEMA-4496-DR-MA. Emergency Feeding program has been approved through November 23, 2020.

COVID-19 Cases in Long-Term Care (LTC) Facilities (as of 10/29)	
Residents/Healthcare Workers of LTC Facilities	<b>25,626</b>
LTC Facilities Reporting at Least One Case of COVID-19	<b>391</b>
Deaths Reported in LTC Facilities	<b>6,390</b>



**NURSING HOME  
FAMILY RESOURCE LINE  
617-660-5399**

CALL US MONDAY THRU FRIDAY FROM 9AM-5PM



### Holyoke Soldiers' Home Weekly Update (current as of 10/27/20)

- 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, has begun 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.

## COVID-19 RESPONSE COMMAND CENTER WEEKLY SITUATION REPORT

- 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.
- On Saturday October 24, indoor visitation and outdoor patio recreation resumed at the Home. The Soldiers Home continues to follow strict infection control protocol to protect the health and safety of veteran residents, loved ones, and staff, as the visitation plan is contingent on the continued stability of infection control and public health metrics.
  - Screening of all visitors will continue, including taking the temperature of 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 Monday - Friday 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Families can also request updates via email at [CommunicationsMailbox-HLY@Mass.gov](mailto: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.
- Veteran and Family Advisory Council meetings will resume in November. The Veteran and Family Advisory Councils will be 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 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.



## COVID-19 RESPONSE COMMAND CENTER WEEKLY SITUATION REPORT

- 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](http://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 of all residents as of October 27 is as follows:
  - Status:
    - 0 positive and not clinically recovered
    - 57 veterans are negative
    - 1 resident have a pending test
    - 73 residents have been determined clinically recovered
    - 1 resident has refused testing
  - Resident locations:
    - 104 veterans are onsite
    - 28 veterans are offsite
    - 22 veterans are at a dedicated skilled nursing unit at Holyoke Medical Center
    - 6 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 10/27/20)**

- Long Term Care veterans have moved 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.
- 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](mailto: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

## COVID-19 RESPONSE COMMAND CENTER WEEKLY SITUATION REPORT

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 27 is as follows:
  - Residents
    - 0 veteran residents are positive
    - 144 veteran residents are negative
    - 41 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.

Contact MassSupport by phone at **888-215-4920** or by email at [MassSupport@riversidecc.org](mailto: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.

## COVID-19 RESPONSE COMMAND CENTER WEEKLY SITUATION REPORT

**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](#)

COVID-19 RESPONSE COMMAND CENTER  
WEEKLY SITUATION REPORT

## *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](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](https://www.RedCrossBlood.org)