

Thursday, October 1, 2020

COVID-19 Command Center

Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency

Situation Update

The Command Center Situation Report is published weekly on Thursdays.



**Additional Phase III
Business & Activities
May Open In Lower
Risk Communities**

Reopening
MASSACHUSETTS

In This Week's Report:

- Latest Data: Public Health Update
- Week in Review: Key State Actions
 - Transition to Phase II of Step III for Lower Risk Communities
 - Over \$5.5 Million Awarded to Improve Food Security in Massachusetts
 - DPH Flu Vaccination Public Information Campaign Launched
 - Tips for a Safe and Healthy Halloween During COVID-19
 - COVID-19 Community Impact Survey Released
 - DOC Issues Visitation Guidance
 - DPH, Emergency Management, and Disaster Recovery Updates
 - Holyoke and Chelsea Soldiers' Homes Weekly Update

Helpful Links:

- [Stop COVID-19](#)
- [State Guidance for Municipalities](#)
- [COVID-19 Travel Order](#)
- [Returning to School Safely](#)
- [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 10/1**

130,461 Total Confirmed Cases ([click here for more information](#))

9,265 Deaths among confirmed cases

2,252,361 individuals tested for the virus to date by MA State Public Health Laboratory, hospitals and commercial laboratories.

United States Last Updated 10/1

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:

7,213,419 Total Cases

206,402 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:

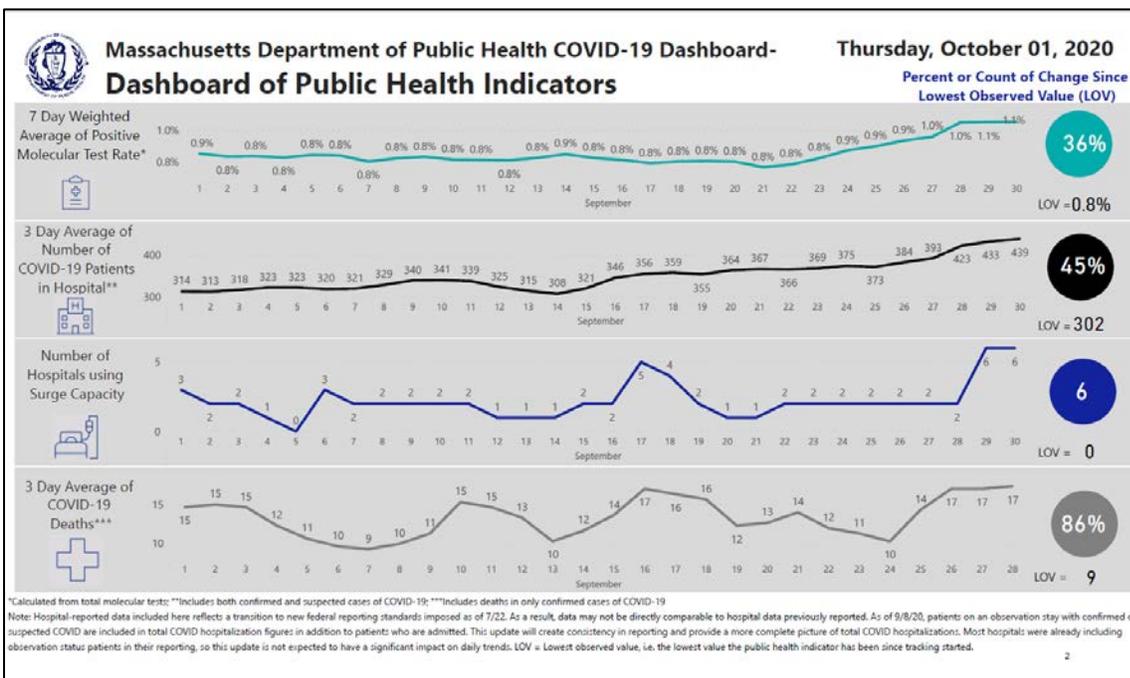
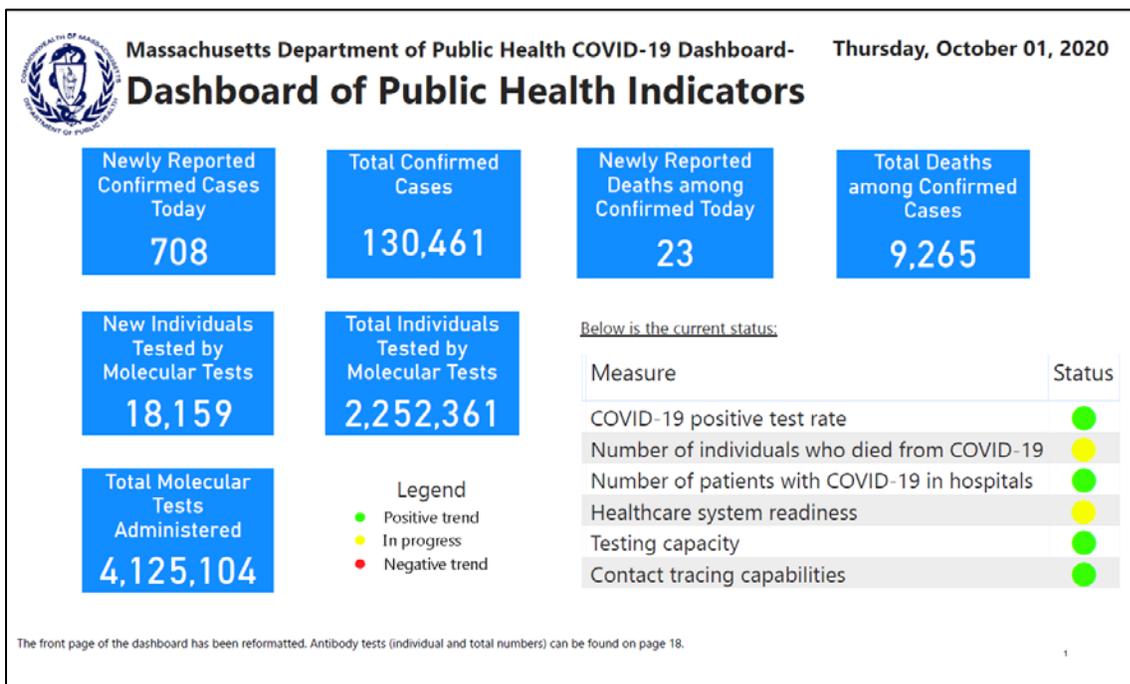
- ✓ Avoid crowds
- ✓ Stay 6 feet away from others
- ✓ Don't shake hands or hug
- ✓ Wear a face covering or mask if physical distancing is not possible.

Latest Data: COVID-19 Public Health Update

Testing Update:

Today, over than **18,000** new individuals tested by molecular (viral) tests were reported in Massachusetts with **708** newly reported confirmed positive cases. The total molecular tests administered to date is over **4.1 million**.

Hospitalizations & Capacity Update: As of today, **436** people are hospitalized, with **84** 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

New Weekly Public Health Data Report Released

Yesterday, the Command Center released the comprehensive [COVID-19 Weekly Public Health Report](#), including community-specific COVID-19 case and testing data. The report also includes risk categories for each city and town based on the average daily incident rate over the past 14 days. [Communities in the high-risk category](#) will receive additional support from the Commonwealth through a cross-agency COVID Enforcement and Intervention Team (CEIT).

The report also includes information on nursing facility staff baseline testing, infection control audits, and more. You can also find information related to contact tracing by local boards of health, and the Community Tracing Collaborative. All the data reports, and raw data files, are available by visiting the [COVID-19 Response Reporting page](#).

Week in Review: State Actions

Transition to Step II of Phase III for Lower Risk Communities

Effective Monday, October 5th, lower risk communities will be permitted to move into Step II of Phase III of the Commonwealth's reopening plan. All other communities will remain in Phase III, Step I. Governor Charlie Baker also issued a revised gatherings order. Industry specific guidance and protocols for a range of Phase I, II, and III businesses will also be updated.

Phase III, Step II:

On May 18, the Baker-Polito Administration released a four-phased plan to reopen the economy based on sustained improvements in public health data.

Last month, the Administration began releasing data on the average daily COVID cases per 100,000 residents, average percent positivity, and total case counts, for all 351 Massachusetts cities and towns.

Lower risk communities are defined as cities and towns that have not been a "red" community (average daily case rate of >8 per 100,000 over the past 14 days) in any of the last three weekly Department of Public Health (DPH) weekly reports.

Effective October 5, a limited number of sectors will be eligible to reopen, with restrictions, in Step II of Phase III for lower risk communities only:

- Indoor performance venues will be permitted to open with 50% capacity with a maximum of 250 people.
- Outdoor performance venue capacity will increase to 50% with a max of 250 people.
- For arcades and indoor and outdoor recreation businesses, additional Step II activities like trampolines, obstacle courses, roller rinks and laser tag will also be permitted to open, and capacity will increase to 50%.
- Fitting rooms will be permitted to open in all types of retail stores.
- Gyms, museums, libraries and driving and flight schools will also be permitted to increase their capacity to 50%.

Read more: [Governor's COVID-19 Order #51](#)

Revised Gatherings Order:

- The limit for indoor gatherings remains at a maximum of 25 people for all communities.

COVID-19 RESPONSE COMMAND CENTER WEEKLY SITUATION REPORT

- Outdoor gatherings at private residences and in private backyards will remain at a maximum of 50 people for all communities.
- Outdoor gatherings at event venues and in public settings will have a limit of 50 people in Step I communities, and a limit of 100 people in lower risk, Step II communities.

Read more: [Governor's COVID-19 Order #52](#)

Over \$5.5 Million Awarded to Improve Food Security in Massachusetts

Building on efforts to ensure a resilient, secure food supply chain in the Commonwealth, the Baker-Polito Administration has announced over \$5.5 million in grants to address urgent food insecurity for Massachusetts residents as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. This funding is being awarded as part of the third 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 that individuals and families throughout the Commonwealth have access to healthy, local food.



The third round of the grant program includes 33 awards totaling \$5,551,387 to fund investments in technology, equipment, increased capacity, and other assistance to help producers distribute food, especially to food insecure communities. When evaluating the applications, considerations included equity, economic impact and need, sustainability and scalability of efforts, and ability to support producer readiness to accept SNAP and HIP benefits. In the program's first two rounds, the [Administration awarded](#) a total of \$6,266,187 to 60 recipients.

Eligible grantees include entities that are part of the Massachusetts local food system including production, processing and distribution, the emergency food distribution network, Buy Local, community and food organizations, school meal programming, urban farms and community gardens, non-profits, and organizations that provide business planning, technical assistance and information technology services. The Request for Responses for project proposals closed on September 15, 2020. Applications submitted before the proposal deadline will continue to be evaluated for future rounds of funding.

The Commonwealth's Food Security Task Force's work is focused on ensuring that food insecurity and food supply needs are addressed during the COVID-19 public health emergency and into the long-term, including setting up more than 1,500 grab and go meal sites at schools across the Commonwealth, investing \$5 million in the [Healthy Incentives Program](#) to bring on new retailers, launching the [SNAP Online Purchasing Program](#) to allow SNAP recipients to use their benefits to buy groceries online from Walmart and Amazon, with over \$9 million in transactions to date, issuing emergency SNAP benefits to more than 240,000 households to bring all SNAP recipients to their maximum benefit amount, bringing more than \$210 million of federal dollars into the state, and leveraging federal flexibilities for SNAP and WIC to make it easier for households to get benefits. WIC flexibilities will continue through the end of the calendar year.

The Administration also [announced](#) approval for September Pandemic EBT, or [P-EBT](#), benefits, to help cover the cost of missed school meals from the month of September due to delayed school opening or remote learning for over 470,000 students and their families. Benefits will start being available September 30, 2020 for an estimated total amount of over \$40 million of federal dollars. P-EBT benefits supplement the [free meals](#). Additionally, the majority of Massachusetts Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program ([SNAP](#)) participants will see an increase in their benefits starting October 1, 2020 due to the annual cost of living adjustment. The maximum monthly

COVID-19 RESPONSE COMMAND CENTER WEEKLY SITUATION REPORT

SNAP benefits will be [increasing 5%](#) to reflect the recent increase in food prices, making these maximum benefits the highest they have been in the history of the program. This will also increase the amount of emergency SNAP benefits that households have been receiving monthly since March.

This grant program implements the recommendations of the Food Security Task Force, which was convened by the Massachusetts COVID-19 Command Center in response to increased demands for food assistance. The task force is composed of a broad group of public and private members charged with ensuring food insecurity and food supply needs are addressed during the COVID-19 public health emergency.

The Food Insecurity Infrastructure Grant Program was announced in May 2020 as part of a \$56 million investment by the Baker-Polito Administration to combat urgent food insecurity for some Massachusetts families and individuals as a result of COVID-19. The Administration also announced a \$5 million increase for the [Healthy Incentives Program](#) to meet increased demand for local produce and to increase access points that process SNAP and HIP benefits, \$12 million for the provision of 25,000 family food boxes per week through a regional food supply system, and \$3 million in funding as an immediate relief valve to food banks.

In August, the Baker-Polito Administration [launched](#) the [MassGrown Exchange](#), an online platform designed to facilitate business-to-business connections within the local food system for products and services. Developed by the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR), in collaboration with the Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF), this platform was established to both address COVID-19 disruptions to the local food supply and to serve as a helpful tool and resource for Massachusetts growers and producers in accessing markets beyond the duration of the COVID-19 emergency.

DPH Public Awareness Campaign Encourages Residents to Get a Flu Shot

Last Friday the Massachusetts Department of Public Health launched statewide public awareness campaign encouraging all residents to get vaccinated now against influenza to reduce illness during the COVID-19 pandemic. [The “Flu Facts” campaign](#) will be featured on multiple media platforms across the Commonwealth in both Spanish and English.

Getting a flu shot is even more important this year due to COVID-19. Many symptoms of the flu and COVID are similar. A flu shot protects the individual, their family, and preserves health care resources during the pandemic.



The campaign’s [key messages](#) include:

- the flu vaccine is safe and effective
- parents as well as children should get a flu shot
- immunization is especially important for people over 65, pregnant, or who have underlying health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, and Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)
- when you get a flu shot, you are protecting yourself – and you are protecting others

The ads will appear on TV, highway billboards, transit station posters and buses, and across a variety of social media platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube, and TikTok.

For more information about influenza, visit www.mass.gov/flu, or call your health care provider, local board of health, or DPH at (617) 983-6800.

Important Updates

Tips for a Safe and Healthy Halloween During COVID-19

As a reminder, the following COVID-19 prevention and mitigation standards apply to all activities in Massachusetts, including Halloween activities. Residents should adhere to each of the following:

- Wear a face mask or face covering. For more information on face masks and face coverings, please see the state's [Mask Up MA](#) webpage.
- Observe good hand hygiene, including hand washing and use of alcohol-based sanitizers with at least 60% alcohol. Carry hand sanitizer and use it often, especially after coming into contact with frequently touched surfaces and before eating candy.
- Refrain from touching your face.
- Stay home and refrain from Halloween activities, including handing out Halloween treats, if:
 - you feel unwell;
 - you have tested positive for COVID-19;
 - you have been exposed to someone with COVID-19; or
 - you have traveled to or from a state that is not classified as lower risk within the last 14 days. For more information on lower risk states, please see the state's COVID-19 [Travel Order](#) webpage.
- Maintain social distancing of at least 6 feet of physical distance from all other participants who are not members of the same household.



English-Spanish bus shelter sign created as part of the CEIT public messaging campaign.

Residents and communities should follow the [Halloween activity guidance released by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) to understand alternative ways to participate in Halloween that may limit the risk of exposure to COVID-19. As a reminder, any Halloween activities are subject to the current [gathering size limits](#) as well as applicable [sector-specific workplace safety standards](#).

COVID-19 Community Impact Survey Launched

Last week the Department of Public Health launched the COVID-19 Community Impact Survey 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.



COVID-19 RESPONSE COMMAND CENTER WEEKLY SITUATION REPORT

DOC Issues Guidance on Visitation During COVID-19

As of September 28, 2020, the Department of Correction has resumed general, in-person visitation at its facilities. The Department has issued guidelines that balance the benefits of visitation with the need for vigilance against COVID-19.

Visitation guidelines for each facility are contingent upon testing data and positivity rates specific to each site and in the broader community. Like re-opening practices across the Commonwealth, DOC's approach is based on data and may change based on that data.

Personal visits are limited during this phase to one visit per inmate per week, with up to two visitors at a time, and must be scheduled 24 hours in advance. Visitors will still need to ensure they are added to their loved ones pre-approved visiting list and have completed the pre-approval process. To see the guidelines on how to prepare for visits, [please review information on DOC's website](#).

Additional Department of Public Health Updates:

- Eleven municipalities (Attleboro, Avon, Boston, Dracut, Haverhill, Lowell, Lynnfield, Methuen, Middleton, North Andover and Springfield) were added to the list of communities in Massachusetts at higher risk for COVID-19 based on the average daily cases per 100,000 residents; other communities currently on the list are Chelsea, Everett, Framingham, Holliston, Lawrence, Lynn, Marlborough, Nantucket, New Bedford, Revere, Winthrop, and Worcester.
- Issued guidance for all healthcare facilities regarding Updated Anterior Nares (Nasal Swab) Specimen Collection by Unlicensed Healthcare Personnel.
- HHS ASPR notified DPH that the HHS memorandum of agreement with Gilead Sciences, Inc. (the manufacturer of remdesivir) and AmerisourceBergen (the distributor) ended on September 30, 2020, and no further allocations of remdesivir will be made by the federal government. Hospitals can purchase unrestricted amounts of remdesivir directly from the distributor. According to Gilead Sciences, Inc., AmerisourceBergen will remain the sole distributor of remdesivir, at least through December 2020.
- Updated Flu information for the 2020-2021 season, including: Immunization Action Coalition (IAC) Model Standing Orders, Screening Forms, Flu Products Chart, and VISs (IAC Website); DPH updated sample influenza vaccine consent and screening forms that can be used for school immunization clinics; and DPH's Important Resources for Fall Vaccination Clinics
- MA211 received 2,431 calls from Thursday 9/24 through Wednesday 9/30 for a new total of 122,199.

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 17 residents are housed in this hotel (no change since last Thursday)
 - Isolation support will continue in support of the "Stop the Spread" testing initiative.
- A total of 133,180 meals have been distributed to date through state contracted hotel sites and distributions of food boxes and meal bags.

Logistics (including Personal Protective Equipment and Supplies)

- 25 orders prepared for pickup or delivery from 9/25-10/1.
- Working with the CEIT, KN-95 masks and alcohol-based hand wipes are scheduled to be delivered to six locations on 10/2/2020.

COVID-19 RESPONSE COMMAND CENTER WEEKLY SITUATION REPORT

- KN-95 mask distribution to test sites, in coordination with the Command Center, is scheduled to begin next week once informational flyers are received.
- DPH coordinated 12 deliveries to health care entities on Tuesday (9/29) (2 PPE/10 testing supplies), and 27 deliveries have been scheduled for Friday (10/2) (6 PPE/10 testing supplies/11 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 FEMA RPA Applicants: 613 (+7)
- Total # Obligated Projects: 30 / +\$ (+0 / +\$)
- Total # of Payments Disbursed: 20 / \$ 6,863,174.69 (+ / +\$)
- Total # of Partial Payments Disbursed: 1 / \$170,759.77 (+0 / +\$)
- Online Applicant Technical Assistant Requests: 451 (+1)
- Continuing to provide technical assistance to project applicants.
- FEMA approved and extended the period of authorization for emergency feeding under major disaster declaration FEMA-4496-DR-MA from April 27 until October 24, 2020 or the termination of the Public Health Emergency declared by the Secretary of Health and Human Services, whichever occurs earlier.
- MEMA submitted a request to FEMA to extend the Non-Congregate Medical Sheltering program for an additional 30-day operational period.
- Presented on Public Assistance eligibility and the October 15 submission deadline in a webinar hosted by A&F regarding the second round of Coronavirus Relief Funding for municipalities.

COVID-19 Cases in Long-Term Care (LTC) Facilities (as of 10/1)	
Residents/Healthcare Workers of LTC Facilities	24,921
LTC Facilities Reporting at Least One Case of COVID-19	384
Deaths Reported in LTC Facilities	6,086



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

CALL US MONDAY THRU FRIDAY FROM 9AM-5PM



Holyoke Soldiers' Home Weekly Update (current as of 9/29/20)

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.

COVID-19 RESPONSE COMMAND CENTER WEEKLY SITUATION REPORT

- We are happy to report that 9/30 marks the completion of 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. The third-floor refresh is complete, and the veterans that are currently on the second floor will move tomorrow to their new rooms. Following the move, Phase II of the Refresh Project will begin on the second floor of the Home.
- 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 week, the Home welcomed the following new permanent staff:
 - Chief Operating Officer
 - Assistant Director of Nursing
 - In-House Clinical Nurse Educator
 - Occupational Health Nurse, a newly created position
 - Chaplain
 - Capital Projects/DCAMM Coordinator
 - Informatics Coordinator
- The Soldiers' Home in Holyoke is welcoming families and loved ones for outdoor visitation Tuesday through Saturday each week with 20 slots each day for veterans to visit with their loved ones. There have been 828 outdoor visits in total with veterans from families and loved ones. The [outdoor visitation plan](#) remains contingent on the continued stability of infection control and public health metrics.
 - Outdoor visitation is in addition to continued video visits for regular family communication through video chat, and the Family Hotline 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.
 - 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 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

COVID-19 RESPONSE COMMAND CENTER WEEKLY SITUATION REPORT

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 September 29 is as follows:**
 - The status of all residents:
 - 0 positive and not clinically recovered
 - 59 veterans are negative
 - 0 residents have a pending test
 - 78 residents have been determined clinically recovered
 - 1 resident has refused testing
 - Resident locations:
 - 112 veterans are onsite
 - 26 veterans are offsite
 - 24 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 other employees who previously tested positive have been determined clinically recovered

Chelsea Soldiers' Home Weekly Update (current as of 9/29/20)

- There are currently no COVID-19-positive veteran residents at the Soldiers' Home in Chelsea. A resident who was clinically recovered from COVID-19 experienced COVID-like symptoms, was proactively transferred to a hospital for treatment and tested positive but has since tested negative twice and is not considered positive. The resident is being treated for issues not related to COVID-19 at an acute care facility offsite.
- At this time, there are two non-clinical staff members of the Soldiers' Home in Chelsea that were identified during regular staff surveillance testing. In the case of each positive staff person, per infection control protocol, the Home immediately puts in place necessary precautions including deep cleaning, contact tracing, and suspending visitation. The Home will continue to perform surveillance testing, and will continue to follow CMS, CDC and DPH guidance in identifying potential close contacts of each positive case.
 - On September 29, a non-clinical staff member of the Soldiers' Home in Chelsea who had clinically recovered from COVID-19 tested positive. This individual does not provide direct care to residents.
 - On September 17, a non-clinical staff member of the Soldiers' Home in Chelsea tested positive for COVID-19. This staff member does not provide direct care to residents.
 - 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.

COVID-19 RESPONSE COMMAND CENTER WEEKLY SITUATION REPORT

- Visitation is temporarily suspended per infection control protocol to protect the health and safety of veteran residents and loved ones, as the [outdoor 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.
 - Video visits between veteran residents and their loved ones are continuing, and the Family Line is available for ad hoc updates with support from social work and clinical staff.
 - 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 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 September 29 is as follows:**
 - Residents:
 - 0 veteran residents are positive
 - 146 veteran residents are negative
 - 43 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:

- Free and confidential counseling for stress and other emotional reactions to the Pandemic in multiple languages
- Referral to services
- Free mental health screenings on MassSupport website: www.MassSupport.org

COVID-19 RESPONSE COMMAND CENTER WEEKLY SITUATION REPORT

MassSupport can help you:

- Take stock of needs
- Identify solutions
- Enhance or develop coping strategies
- Feel heard
- Understand and manage your reactions
- Be less stressed
- Get reliable, fact-based information

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.

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.

Stay Informed

- Get information from trusted sources. Visit <https://www.mass.gov/covid19> for the latest news, case counts, and lab testing results. Call 2-1-1 with questions. Text the keyword **COVIDMA** to **888-777** to receive notifications to your phone. To receive these notifications in Spanish, text **COVIDMAESP** to **888-777**
- Take care of your emotional health:
- Call 2-1-1 and choose the "CALL2TALK" option.

COVID-19 RESPONSE COMMAND CENTER
WEEKLY SITUATION REPORT

- 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](#)

Infographics

- [Stop the Spread of Germs](#)
- Social distancing: for [youth](#) for [general audience](#)
- [Coping with stress or fear](#)
- What to do [if you are sick](#)
- 10 tips for at-home [quarantine or self-monitoring](#)

Short videos:

Overview of COVID-19 Testing	Importance of COVID-19 Testing	How to Safely Cover Your Face Outside of Home
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English • Spanish • Portuguese • Simplified Chinese • Traditional Chinese • Vietnamese • Haitian Creole 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English • Spanish • Portuguese • Simplified Chinese • Traditional Chinese • Vietnamese • Haitian Creole 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spanish • Portuguese • Simplified Chinese • Traditional Chinese • Haitian Creole • Vietnamese

- [10 Tips for at home quarantine or self-monitoring](#)
- [Stop the Spread of Germs like Seasonal Flu and COVID-19 \(:30\)](#)
- [Help Prevent COVID-19 with Social Distancing \(:30\)](#)
- [How Young People Can Help Prevent COVID-19 with Social Distancing \(:30\)](#)
- [Coping with Stress and Fear from COVID-19 \(:30\)](#)
- [Stay Home - Save Lives \(:06\)](#)

Spanish Radio Spots (available on request):

- “Prevent the Spread of Germs,” “Social Distancing and Stay Home,” and “Stay Safe. Save Lives.”

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