

Thursday, September 10, 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:

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- Week in Review: Key State Actions
 - #StopCovid: Support for High Priority Communities Highlighted
 - Additional Shared Streets & Spaces Grant Funding Announced
 - New Nursing Home Accountability & Support Package Announced
 - Updated list of COVID-19 lower-risk states
 - DPH, Emergency Management, and Disaster Recovery Updates
 - Holyoke and Chelsea Soldiers' Homes Weekly Update

Helpful Links:

- [Stop COVID-19](#)
- [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](#)

Background on the Command Center

The COVID Command Center, under the leadership of Secretary Marylou Sudders and reporting to Governor Charlie Baker and Lt. Governor Karyn Polito, is the Commonwealth's single point of strategic decision making and coordination for the Administration's comprehensive COVID-19 response.



Situation in Numbers

Massachusetts **current as of 9/10**

121,759 Total Confirmed Cases ([click here for more information](#))

8,957 Deaths among confirmed cases

1,906,212 individuals tested for the virus to date by MA State Public Health Laboratory, hospitals and commercial laboratories.

United States **Last Updated 9/10**

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:

6,343,562 Total Cases

190,262 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:

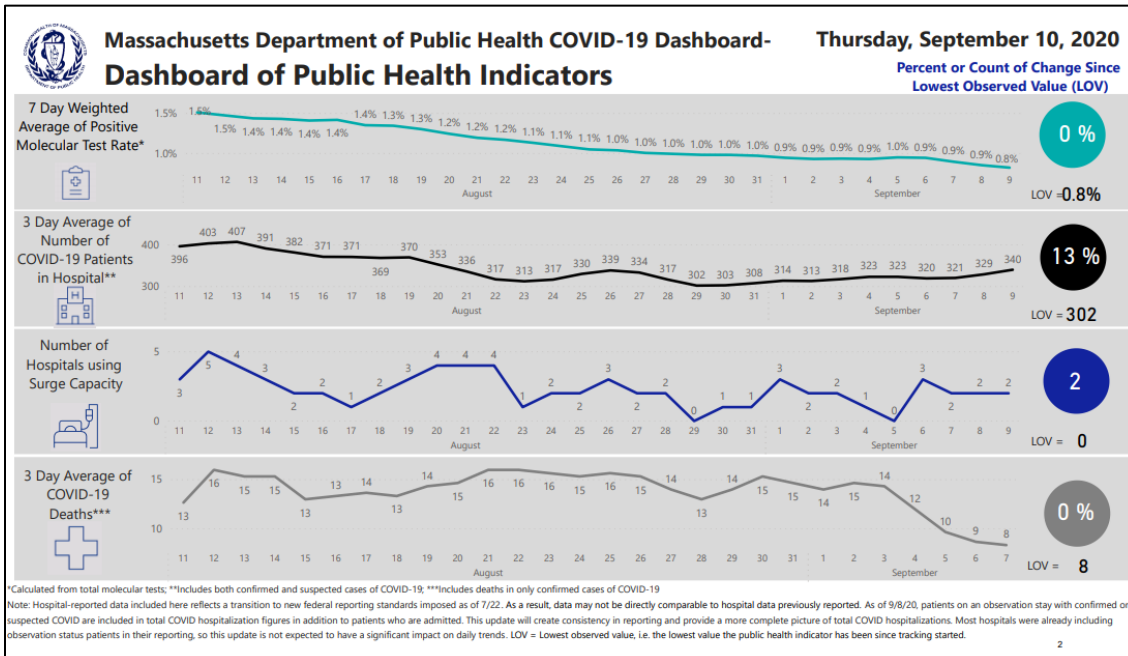
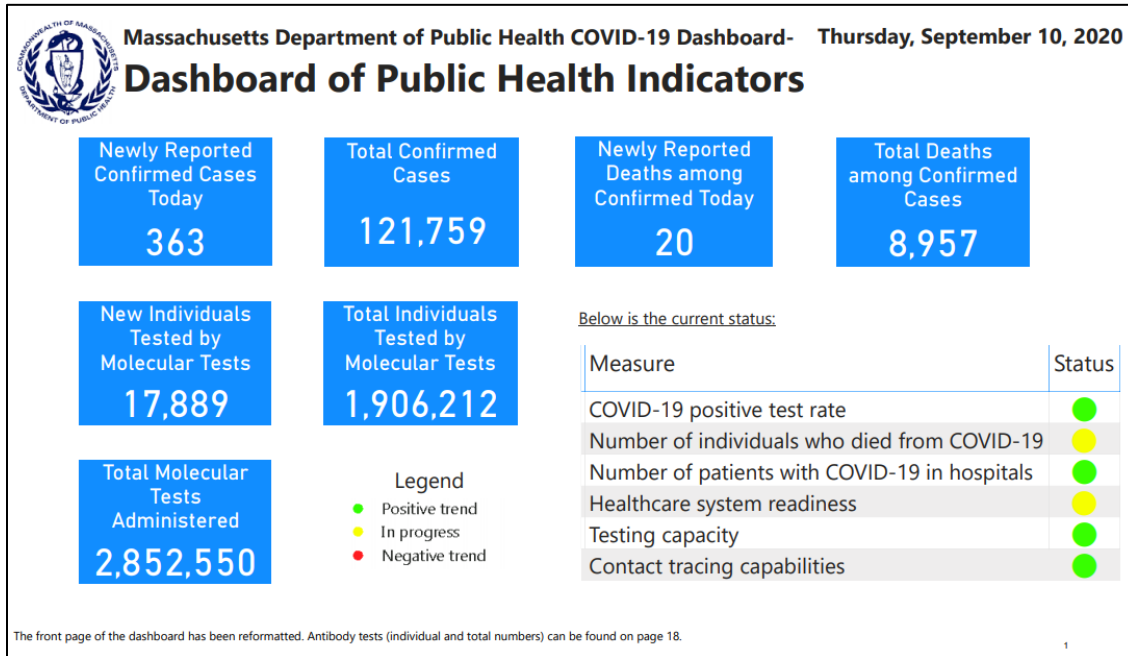
- ✓ Avoid crowds
- ✓ Stay 6 feet away from others
- ✓ Don't shake hands or hug
- ✓ Wear a face covering or mask if physical distancing is not possible.

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

Testing Update:

Today, over than **17,000** new individuals tested by molecular (viral) tests were reported in Massachusetts with **363** newly reported confirmed positive cases. The total molecular tests administered to date is more than **2.8 million**. **Hospitalizations & Capacity Update:** As of today, **355** people are hospitalized, with **59** 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.

DPH has also posted an archive of previously released city and town data dating back to April on the COVID-19 reporting page. The Weekly Public Health Report includes also includes data on recoveries, along with detailed case and death data related to long term care facilities. The report also includes information on new 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

#StopCovid: Mitigation Efforts in High Priority Communities Highlighted

On Tuesday, Governor Baker and Lt. Governor Polito shared an update on support provided to communities with persistently higher rates of COVID-19 through the administration's COVID-19 Enforcement and Intervention Team (CEIT). Over the Labor Day weekend, activities were ramped up in 5 communities including Chelsea, Everett, Lawrence, Lynn, and Revere.

Activities included the launch of a multi-lingual, community-specific, public messaging campaign. The campaign also included the deployment of on-the-ground field teams that visited 16 high traffic locations providing residents and businesses with COVID-19 education and public health resources. The teams which include residents from the community distributed over 5,000 signs, 17,000 flyers with community-specific information on stopping the spread, and nearly 4,000 bottles of hand sanitizer. The field teams will continue their outreach work in partnership with local community leaders and organizations, and their activities will be expanded to the city of Framingham this coming weekend.



The Governor also provided an update on enforcement efforts, including;

- State Police assistance provided local partners in the cities of Brockton, Revere and New Bedford over the Labor Day Weekend, and providing dedicated patrols at DCR properties and on the water in Gloucester.
- Recent Division of Professional Licensure inspection of nearly 100 licensed establishments that resulted in the identification of 47 violations.
- Alcoholic Beverage Control Commission's inspection of over 1,200 licensed establishments statewide, with 900 establishments found to be following the Commonwealth's safety guidelines. (The other establishments were either fined or issued warnings.)

To find out more about the Commonwealth's efforts to assist communities with higher rates of COVID-19 visit [Mass.Gov/StopCovid](https://www.mass.gov/StopCovid).

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Administration Announces Added Funding for Shared Streets and Spaces Program

Today, the Governor, Lt. Governor joined Transportation Secretary Stephanie Pollack, and Medford Mayor Breanna Lungo-Koehn to highlight an additional \$5 million in CARES and state funding for the Shared Streets and Spaces Program. This initiative provides assistance for communities to conceive, design and implement tactical changes to curbs, streets, on-street parking spaces and parking lots in support of public health, safe mobility, and renewed commerce. To find out more about the program, visit MassDOT's [Shared Streets and Spaces Grant Program website](#).



The Governor also announced Phase III reopening modifications today to support businesses and communities to mitigate the impact of COVID-19. The modifications, contained in an [Executive Order](#), will extend the municipal permitting timeframe for expanding outdoor dining, and allow indoor and outdoor arcades to open next week.

New Nursing Facility Accountability and Supports Announced

Today, the Baker-Polito Administration announced a new Nursing Facility Accountability and Supports package a set of policy reforms and funding for nursing facilities that builds on the [accountability and support measures taken in April](#) to hold facilities to higher standards of care and infection control. The initiative will also invest up to \$140 million, and restructures Medicaid rates, consistent with the recommendations of the [Nursing Facility Taskforce](#).

Throughout the public health emergency, the Commonwealth has taken significant steps to support nursing facility residents and staff, including over \$260 million in state funding, staffing supports, and providing over 2.8 million pieces of personal protective equipment (PPE), on top of \$180 million in federal funding. In addition, the state has enhanced facility accountability through regular infection control surveys and other compliance audits. Since April, new COVID-19 cases in nursing facilities have declined by over 93%, and deaths have declined by 98%, based on 7-day averages.

“The [Nursing Facility Accountability and Supports Package 2.0](#) continues our financial support and oversight initiated in the spring, and marks the first step in addressing the policy recommendations of the Nursing Facility Taskforce to protect resident safety, ensure access to high quality facilities, right-size the industry, and hold facilities to higher standards for both patient care and investment in the direct care workforce,” said Secretary of Health and Human Services and Head of the COVID-19 Command Center Marylou Sudders. “These reforms and investments will improve the quality of care and safety of residents in anticipation of a potential COVID-19 resurgence in the fall, and for the health of residents in the future.” Components of the new package include:

1. New requirements to strengthen staffing and the direct care workforce, ensure adequate spacing in congregate rooms, and improve standards of care;
2. Long-term, \$82 million investment through MassHealth rate restructuring;
3. Up to \$60 million in targeted, COVID-19 funding;
4. Sustained oversight and monitoring; and
5. Early identification of issues

See the [news release on today's announcement](#) for more details.

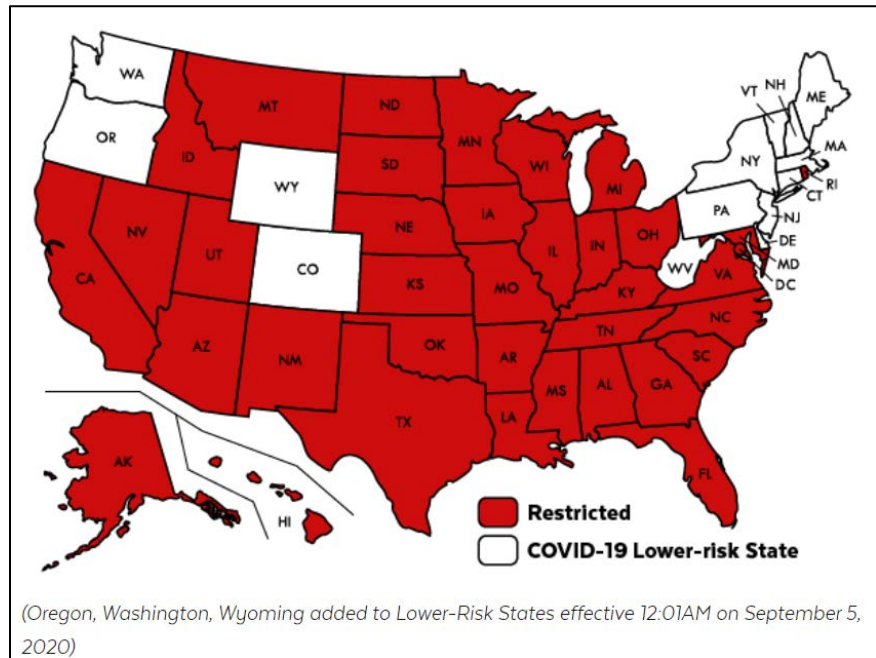
COVID-19 RESPONSE COMMAND CENTER WEEKLY SITUATION REPORT

Updated list of COVID-19 lower-risk states

Travelers from COVID-19 lower-risk States are not required to fill out the [Massachusetts Travel Form](#) and do not need to quarantine. States are included on the list based on meeting two criteria: average daily cases per 100K below 6 AND positive test rate below 5%, both measured as a 7-day rolling average. Data from [covidexitstrategy.org](#) as of September 4, 2020.

The current list of COVID-19 lower-risk states include:

- Colorado,
- Connecticut
- New Jersey
- Delaware
- Maine
- New Hampshire
- New York
- Oregon
- Pennsylvania
- Vermont
- Washington
- West Virginia
- Wyoming



Additional information about this travel order, including the list of lower-risk states, exemptions, business guidance, and other details, is available [here](#).

Important Updates

Department of Public Health Updates:

- DPH hosted multiple inter-agency calls with local health officials and shared resources to provide support, guidance, and technical assistance related to safe reopening of schools, remote and hybrid learning models, workplace safety, and a [funding opportunity](#) for local health departments to build their capacity to effectively address the needs of individuals with disabilities during COVID-19 and other emergencies.
- DPH, as the state agency for CMS, suspended COVID-19 testing at Orig3n, a Boston-based laboratory, due to quality assurance concerns that led to an unusually high rate of false positive test results. The laboratory is required to respond with a written plan of correction no later than 9/14 and can face sanctions if action is not taken.
- DPH has established a COVID-19 Vaccine Planning Group with three subcommittees for policy, logistics, and communications, and will participate in a 9/17/20 FEMA Region 1 Table Top Exercise for vaccine planning and coordination.
- DPH Epidemiology Line responded to 382 COVID-19 calls and 142 non-COVID-19 calls from 8/31 through 9/6.
- MA211 received 2,531 calls from Tuesday 9/1 through Monday 9/7 for a new total of 113,333.

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 22 residents are housed in this hotel (change of +6 since last Thursday)
 - Isolation support will continue in support of the “Stop the Spread” testing initiative.
- A total of 130,747 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)

- Over the last week, 18 orders were prepared for pickup or delivery from MEMA’s State Logistics Warehouse.
- 570 Body Bags utilized from regional EMS caches are being replenished in coordination with MDPH OPEM.
- MEMA anticipates delivery cloth face coverings from HHS to support DESE and school distribution. Specific plans for distribution are currently being developed in coordination with DESE.
- DPH coordinated 11 deliveries to health care entities on Wednesday 9/9, due to the Monday holiday (2 PPE/9 testing supplies), and 7 deliveries have been scheduled for Friday 9/11 (3 PPE/4 testing supplies).

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: 580 (+11)
- Total # Obligated Projects: 30 / +\$7,800,980.21 (+2 / +\$ 15,629.49)
- Total # of Payments Disbursed: 13 / \$1,093,259.82 (+0 / +\$)
- Total # of Partial Payments Disbursed: 1 / \$170,759.77 (+0 / +\$0)
- Online Applicant Technical Assistant Requests: 443 (+3)
- MEMA’s new developed Pre-Award Grant Management System will go live on Monday, September 14, 2020. The Commonwealth will be the first state in the country to have a GMS that tracks projects pre-award and is entirely built on MEMA’s SharePoint platform. Once testing is complete, the vendor will demo the Post-Award workflows.
- The Commonwealth’s application to receive grant funding to pay a limited additional weekly unemployment benefit to claimants under the federal Lost Wages Supplemental Payment Assistance (LWA) program for the 6 weeks ending 9/5/20 has been approved by FEMA. Disbursements to eligible standard unemployment beneficiaries will begin today.

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COVID-19 Cases in Long-Term Care (LTC) Facilities (as of 9/3)	
Residents/Healthcare Workers of LTC Facilities	24,680
LTC Facilities Reporting at Least One Case of COVID-19	381
Deaths Reported in LTC Facilities	5,878



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

CALL US MONDAY THRU FRIDAY FROM 9AM-5PM



ICYMI: 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

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

Holyoke Soldiers' Home Weekly Update (current as of 9/8/20)

- As part of its close monitoring and early detection guidelines, the Soldiers' Home in Holyoke conducts weekly surveillance testing of residents and staff, which last week revealed one administrative staff member who tested positive. While this staffer does not provide direct patient care, the Home immediately implemented its infection control protocols, which includes suspending visitation for two weeks.
 - The [outdoor visitation plan](#) remains contingent on the continued stability of infection control and public health metrics.
 - 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.

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- Staff who are not feeling well are instructed not to come to work and to contact their health care provider. If staff show any signs of COVID-symptoms, they are required to self-quarantine at home, per CDC guidance for health care workers.
- The Soldiers' Home is encouraging loved ones to schedule video visits with veteran residents. The Family Hotline is available for ad hoc updates with support from social work and clinical staff. Families can call the Family Hotline 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.
- 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 Home continues to adhere to infection control protocols throughout the Home and continues the cohorting of veterans with the same status.
- 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, and last week launched a website for the project, www.mass.gov/HolyokeSHProject, and an online survey to gather input: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/WCX32P2>.
 - Stakeholder input is being gathered in addition to assessing the needs, 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 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.
- Holyoke's Clinical Command continues to respond to the COVID-19 outbreak, monitoring staffing levels, while bringing on additional management staff for nursing, facilities, and administration. 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, and to support the recovery of veterans as the health status of many stabilizes. All veteran residents' health is being monitored and retesting is being conducted for veterans both on- and off-site as clinically appropriate.
- 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 8 is as follows:**
 - The status of all residents:
 - 0 positive and not clinically recovered
 - 58 veterans are negative
 - 1 resident has a test pending
 - 79 residents have been determined clinically recovered
 - 1 resident has refused testing
 - Resident locations:

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- 114 veterans are onsite
- 25 veterans are offsite
 - 24 veterans are at a dedicated skilled nursing unit at Holyoke Medical Center
 - 1 veteran is 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:
 - 1 administrative staff tested positive
 - All others who previously tested positive are clinically recovered

Chelsea Soldiers' Home Weekly Update (current as of 9/8/20)

- The Chelsea Soldiers' Home continues to welcome visitors for outdoor visitation between veterans and loved ones and at the start of this week there had been over 450 visits. 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.
 - Outdoor visitation is occurring in addition to continued video visits between veteran residents and their loved ones. 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.
- The Soldiers' Home in Chelsea is reporting the recovery of residents based on clinical determinations following the retesting of all veterans, and 43 residents who had previously tested positive have been determined clinically recovered.
- The Home has eased restrictions for Dorm residents, who can now order food delivery from area restaurants, and drive in their personal vehicles off-site to medical appointments. The curfew has been extended, now from 11pm - 5am. Dorm veterans are visiting a local outdoor music event, respecting social distancing.
- 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 8 is as follows:**
 - Residents:
 - 0 veteran residents are positive
 - 148 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

Employees:

0 employees are positive

All employees who previously tested positive have been determined clinically recovered

Resources

Red Cross Virtual Family Assistance Center

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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.
- 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

Infographics

- [Stop the Spread of Germs](#)

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- [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.”

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 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