

Wednesday, April 15, 2020

COVID-19 Command Center

Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency

Situation Update

State Actions in Today's Report:

- Daily Case Update (Link in sidebar)
- New Funding and Ongoing Steps to Support Long-Term Care Facilities
- Expanded COVID-19 Data Reporting
- Update on Mobile Testing Program & Cases in LTC Facilities
- Update on Holyoke and Chelsea Soldiers' Homes

Governor Baker Outlines Support for Long-Term Care Facilities (Details Below)



Helpful Links:

- [Jobs Available to Assist Long Term Care Facilities](#)
- [Mass.Gov/covid19](#)
- [Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency](#)
- [Unemployment & COVID-19](#)
- [Dept. Of Transitional Assistance Online Portal](#)
- [FrontlineMA.org](#)
- [Emergency Childcare Site](#)
- [MBTA.com/covid19](#)
- [COVID-19 Cost Eligibility and Tracking Guidance](#)
- [Complete List of Emergency Orders & 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 4/15**

29,918 Total Cases ([click here for more information](#))

1,108 Deaths

132,023 patients tested to date by MA State Public Health Laboratory, hospitals and commercial laboratories.

United States **current as of 4/15**

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:

605,390 Total Cases

24,582 Deaths

55 Jurisdictions Reporting Cases (50 states, D.C., Puerto Rico, Guam, Northern Marianas, and US V.I.)

Social Distancing Basics:

- ✓ Call/Facetime/online chat with friends and loved ones.

If you go out:

- ✓ Avoid crowds
- ✓ Stay 6 feet away from others
- ✓ Don't shake hands or hug

State Actions Today

Earlier today, Governor Charlie Baker and Lt. Governor Karyn Polito joined Secretary of Health and Human Services Marylou Sudders to provide an update on Coronavirus. ([See video of today's briefing](#))

New Funding and Ongoing Steps to Support Long-Term Care Facilities (News Release)

The Baker-Polito Administration today outlined ongoing steps to support long-term care facilities, including \$130 million in new funding, expanded testing, PPE distribution and more.

Long-Term Care Facility Support:

The COVID-19 Response Command Center is working to detect, prevent and manage the outbreaks of COVID-19 throughout the state and is intensely focused on mitigating the spread of illness in senior living facilities. Statewide, there are 383 nursing homes, 255 assisted living residences, and 93 rest homes. There are approximately 38,000 residents in nursing homes; 16,500 in assisted living residences; and 3,000 residents in rest homes. Recognizing that these facilities are highly vulnerable to outbreaks of COVID-19, [the Administration in March implemented](#) stringent visitation restrictions and screening guidelines for staff at long-term care facilities.

Today, the Administration outlined ongoing steps and new resources to support these facilities:

\$130 Million in New Funding:

In early April, the Administration [announced](#) a 10% MassHealth rate increase (approximately \$50 million) across the board for all nursing facilities.

Facilities that create dedicated COVID-19 wings and units and follow necessary safety protocols will be eligible for an additional 15% rate increase, or a net increase of 25% (approximately \$50 million). These funds support additional staffing, infection control and supply costs throughout the state of emergency.

An estimated \$30 million will support facilities that establish dedicated skilled nursing facilities.

Expanded Mobile Testing:

The Commonwealth's Mobile Testing program, a partnership between the Department of Public Health, the National Guard, and the Broad Institute has improved access to testing for nursing homes, rest homes, and assisted living facilities to test more people. On April 13th, the Administration updated testing guidance to encourage long-term care facilities to conduct widespread testing for residents, even if they have no symptoms, and staff. In addition to the mobile testing program, facilities can conduct their own on-site testing using kits supplied by the Broad Institute.

- As of April 14, more than 4,500 tests have been collected at 264 facilities.
- As of April 14, 77 facilities had requested more than 8,600 test kits.

PPE Distribution:

Since the beginning of March, the Command Center has distributed nearly 1.3 million masks, almost 200,000 gowns and over 2 million gloves to long-term care facilities.

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Rapid Response Clinical Team and Staff Resources:

The Commonwealth has also mobilized rapid-response clinical teams to provide short-term support for facilities with a high volume of cases or with critical staffing needs. These teams are made up of EMS technicians, nurses, and other health care professionals.

To meet staffing needs, the Administration has:

- Stood up a Long-Term Care Portal to match individuals that have registered through the portal with the staffing requests submitted by facilities;
- Announced a \$1,000 signing bonus to all individuals that register through the LTC portal to work for a certain amount of time in a nursing home, and;
- Tapped into the volunteers who've signed up through the [Health Professionals Volunteer](#) portal

Crisis Management Support:

To provide crisis management support for long-term care facilities, the Administration has also contracted with a firm specializing in nursing home crisis management. They will be available to provide facilities with on-site management and operational support to assist with staffing, vendors, implementing infection control measures, etc. The firm will also support efforts to stand up dedicated COVID-19 facilities and wings/units within existing nursing facilities.

Dedicated COVID-19 Skilled Nursing Facility Capacity Update:

The Administration has pursued three parallel options for expanding COVID-19 dedicated nursing facility capacity:

- Converting existing occupied facilities to fully dedicated COVID-19 facilities. An example of this is the Beaumont Facility in Worcester.
- Converting empty facilities to stand up a new dedicated COVID-19 nursing facility. An example of this is the Pioneer Valley Recovery Center in East Longmeadow.
- Creating dedicated COVID-19 wings within a broader nursing facility.

To date, in addition to the Beaumont facility, the Commonwealth currently has 5 dedicated COVID-19 facilities opening within the next 7-10 days in Brewster, Falmouth, New Bedford, East Longmeadow, and Great Barrington; and several others in the planning stages.

Expanded Data Reporting

Secretary Sudders announced today that, for the first time, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health will release a breakdown of novel coronavirus cases by city and town, as the state takes additional steps to assess and report the burden of infection across the Commonwealth.

The town-level data, which will be updated each Wednesday, marks the latest in a series of new data reports and information that the Command Center and DPH have made publicly available. These new reports augment the COVID-19 dashboard which is published each day at 4pm. See the links below to find the reports.

- Daily dashboard data [are published here](#)
- Cases, city/town, & hospital facility data [are published here](#)
- PPE distribution data [are published here](#)
- Hospital capacity published data [are published here](#)

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Update on Mobile Testing Program for Long Term Care, Assisted Living Residences and DDS Group Homes

On March 31, the Commonwealth implemented a project that allows for safe, on-site testing of symptomatic residents of nursing and rest homes with a quick turnaround. The program, which has expanded to include Assisted Living Residences, and Department of Developmental Services group homes, is operating under the auspices of the Massachusetts National Guard in partnership with the Department of Public Health and Broad Institute of Cambridge. Since launching the initiative, more than **4,500** tests have been collected at **264 facilities**. Facilities with appropriately trained clinical staff can now conduct their own testing with test kits ordered through the mobile testing program; as of April 14, **77 facilities** had requested more than **8,600** test kits had been sent. See a summary by day below.

Onsite Testing

| Date | Number of Tests Completed | Facilities Visited |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|
| 4/14 | 759 | 37 |
| Total (as of 4/14) | 4,572 | 264 |

Testing Kits Provided

| Date | Number of Kits Sent | Facility Count |
|---------------------------|---------------------|----------------|
| 4/14 | 3,473 | 33 |
| Total (as of 4/14) | 8,644 | 77 |

Cases in Long term Care Facilities (as of 4/15)

| COVID-19 Cases in Long-Term Care (LTC) Facilities | |
|--|-------------|
| Residents/Healthcare Workers of LTC Facilities | 4163 |
| LTC Facilities Reporting at Least One Case of COVID-19 | 222 |
| Deaths Reported in LTC Facilities | 530 |

Other Important Updates

Holyoke Soldiers' Home

- The Holyoke Soldiers' Home is closely tracking personal protective equipment (PPE) closely and recently received a delivery from the Department of Public Health of 50,000 surgical masks and 1,000 gowns.
- The Nursing and Infection Control teams continue to take action and provide oversight, including updating signage throughout the facility and educating staff on the proper use of PPE and infection control measures.
- To support the emotional wellbeing of veteran residents, the Home is remotely engaged spiritual leaders including a Priest for Catholic Veterans, and will be bringing in an Air National Guard Chaplain on Sunday, April 18 and will televise the sermon for Veterans.
- The Holyoke Soldiers' Home continues to be in communication with the VA Health Care System and the Holyoke Medical Center to offer potential alternative locations for short-term care for veteran residents. In all instances, social workers have been in touch with families about these options.

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- The majority of families declined transfers to VA locations. There has been a total of 44 transfers to the satellite unit at Holyoke Medical Center for monitoring and care. Of those 44 transfers, 15 have had positive tests, and 3 have passed away.
- Through a partnership with Holyoke Medical Center and Baystate Health, expedited testing of veteran residents continues and as results come in veterans are being moved and cohorted appropriately within the facility, and social distancing continues to be urged among veteran residents and staff.
- **Strong staff-to-resident ratios have been achieved thanks in large part to the presence of the Massachusetts National Guard trained medical and operational staff.** The clinical command structure continues to refine staffing plans, including working to bring on new nursing leadership and clinical staff.
- The Holyoke Soldiers' Home is regularly communicating with veteran residents' health care proxies and is scheduling regular updates for families.
 - This is being done with the support of the additional clinical case management nursing staff that was brought on board.
 - Families can call the Family Hotline at 413-552-4764 Monday – Friday 8:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m., and Saturday 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 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. If a family member requests an update and is **not** the health care proxy, the name of the health care proxy will be shared and it will be suggested that the health care proxy should call and request the update.
- The Holyoke Soldiers' Home clinical command continues to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and outbreak at the Holyoke Soldiers' Home, and is enforcing quarantine zones for COVID-19 positive residents, and continues to distribute and require use of PPE, restricting visitors, increased personal hygiene measures, and increased disinfection protocols.
- **The total numbers at the Holyoke Soldiers' Home as of Wednesday:**
 - 47 veteran resident deaths (38 positive tests, 8 negatives, 1 unknown)
 - Today's update includes 3 veteran resident deaths: 1 positive DNR, DNH; 1 positive DNR, DNH; 1 negative DNR, TRX
 - 99 veteran residents have tested positive
 - 76 veteran residents have tested negative
 - 3 veteran residents have pending tests
 - 79 employees have tested positive
 - 221 employees have tested negative

Chelsea Soldiers' Home

- All veteran residents have been tested and the results have been received. If residents are positive, they are being isolated and their health is closely monitored, and if they test negative, they are appropriately cohorted and monitored.
 - The Soldiers' Home in Chelsea is beginning to accept Veterans back who had tested positive and were proactively sent out to other facilities. They have been medically cleared to return to the facility and will temporarily stay on a dedicated ward, where their health will be monitored before returning to their respective wards.
 - Additional wards have been established for veterans who are symptomatic but had negative tests.

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- Families can request updates on their loved ones by contacting the Home at CSH@mass.gov.
 - Please note the Soldiers' Home can only share medical information about a resident with the authorized health care proxy on file.
 - Social work staff at the Chelsea Soldiers' Home are supporting veteran and family communication with the use of iPads and video chat.
- Staffing levels continue to be monitored closely by the Chelsea clinical command and they are being augmented by recently established contracts with six agencies to fill open slots with contract staff.
 - As staff testing results are returned, there are currently 42 staff who have tested positive and are therefore quarantined/out from work.
 - Existing staff are being provided emotional support through the Employee Assistance Program.
- The Chelsea Soldiers' Home clinical command continues to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, including regular coordinating calls with the VA Health Care System, daily monitoring of personal protective equipment (PPE) supply, and continuously reviewing and implementing infection control policy.
- **The total numbers at Chelsea Soldiers' Home as of Wednesday:**
 - 12 veteran resident deaths (8 tested positive, 4 tested negative)
 - 23 veteran residents who have tested positive
 - 216 veteran residents who have tested negative
 - 49 staff tested positive

How to Help Out

- [Donate](#) to the Massachusetts COVID-19 Relief Fund.
- Volunteer opportunities for health professionals: [Please click here](#).
- Volunteer for the new Community Tracing Collaborative by visiting the [PIH Ma-Response](#) page [Or DIRECT link](#) to recruiter web.
- Donate or sell personal protective equipment: [Please click here](#).
- Health care facilities can learn more about [requesting personal protective equipment here](#).
- Apply for Jobs at COVID-19 Temporary Care Sites ([Details Here](#)).

Give Blood:

As you are aware, the COVID-19 virus has caused the cancellation of blood drives across the Commonwealth. There is an urgent need **now**. The Governor has deemed "Blood and plasma donors and the employees of the organizations that operate and manage related activities" as an essential service. Your support is needed to communicate to your residents that the need is urgent, and donating is a necessity to supply the hospitals with the blood our neighbors require. Donating blood is safe and people should not hesitate to give. In addition, there is a need for community blood drive sites in the eastern part of the state. Identifying donation sites is vital to meet the demand as we go forward. Your local knowledge, suggestions of sites, and potential partners are crucial to meeting the needs of our neighbors who need blood and blood products. To schedule a new blood drive contact Bill Forsyth at (617) 699-3808 or at email William.Forsyth@redcross.org.

Those who are healthy, feeling well and eligible to give blood or platelets, are urged to make an appointment to donate as soon as possible by using the Red Cross Blood Donor App, visiting RedCrossBlood.org or calling 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767).

Resources

Disaster Recovery Information

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 [website](#) with information and guidance regarding the disaster declaration, eligibility criteria, and the application process.

Massachusetts Frontline Worker Resources

In an effort to connect frontline workers with various supports such as free/discounted meals, guidance on accessing PPE and priority testing, emergency child care, and alternate housing options, the Attorney General's Office developed the Frontline Workers Resource website. The website can be accessed at [FrontlineMA.org](https://www.frontlinema.org).

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.

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 and help others do the same. If you need emotional support during these stressful times:
 - 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.

Please share our Communications Resources

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](#)
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Short videos:

NEW: [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
- Stay Home. Stay Safe. Save Lives.

Social media – please continue to follow and re-tweet DPH on Twitter @MassDPH, updated several times per day.

Requests for Red Cross Emergency Response

American Red Cross

The American Red Cross (ARC) of Massachusetts is committed to fulfilling our Mission of providing emergency relief to our neighbors following a home fire or other disaster. In order to maintain our commitment to assisting to those affected while balancing our volunteer workforce safety, we have implemented the below temporary changes to our response protocols. ARC we will be responding to your requests for service with a virtual response and ask your assistance in sharing this information with your Incident Commanders and Dispatch Center personnel.

Notification: Continue to request a response by contacting our long-standing emergency line **800-564-1234**.

When calling: Please have contact information for the head of household for each displaced family unit.

A point of contact from the Fire Department or Emergency Management on-scene that we can coordinate with if needed. Quick assessment as to extent of damage.

What we will do:

- Contact each head of household by phone or video chat. Open a virtual case for each affected family.
- Arrange for lodging if needed.
- Deliver a Client Assistance Card (financial assistance) to hotel, family member's home, etc.
- Provide Recovery guidance and assistance in the days following the incident.

If a virtual response is not possible, we will send a minimal number of Red Cross volunteers to the scene to orchestrate the virtual intake process. We value our partnership with your department and encourage you to contact us with any questions.