



Office of  
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Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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**Baker-Polito Administration Announces Field Medical Station Details, New Support for Health Care Workforce, Expanded COVID-19 Data Reporting and Domestic Violence Resources**

**BOSTON** – Today, the Baker-Polito Administration announced the details for a new field medical station at the Boston Convention and Exhibition Center (BCEC), increased support for health care workforce and patients, expansion of COVID-19 reporting data, new guidance for workers seeking unemployment benefits and protections for survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault. Earlier today, the Administration announced new guidance for workers seeking unemployment benefits through the implementation of the CARES Act.

**Boston Convention Center Field Medical Station:** In an effort to reduce the strain on the state's health care system and area hospitals, the Baker-Polito Administration today announced details for the Field Medical Station at the Boston Convention and Exhibition Center. Anticipating a surge in COVID-19 cases, the Administration worked collaboratively with the City of Boston and community partners to provide an additional 1,000 beds for COVID-19 patients at this new site. Partners Health Care will lead clinical care efforts at the BCEC field medical station, in a collaboration with Boston Health Care for the Homeless called Boston HOPE. The Convention Center site is the latest Field Medical Station to be stood up by the Command Center and its partners in the health care community.

**Support for Health Care Workforce, COVID-19 Patients:** Today, Governor Baker issued three emergency orders to further support the Commonwealth's health care workforce and expand its capacity, as well as ensure access to in-patient services for COVID-19 patients. These orders include:

- **Easing licensing restrictions for foreign-educated doctors to allow medical practice in the Commonwealth:** This order specifically allows graduates of international medical schools who have successfully completed at least two years of postgraduate resident medical training in the US to be eligible for licensure in the Commonwealth. [Read the Order.](#)
- **Expediting licensure of nursing students and graduates:** This order allows nursing school graduates and students in their final semesters of nursing programs to practice nursing in advance of receiving a license, provided that they are directly supervised by other licensed medical professionals. [Read the Order.](#)

- **Ensuring access to in-patient services:** This order mandates that insurers must cover all medically required costs of COVID-19 treatment in out-of-network hospitals or other medical facilities with no charge to the patient, including co-pays, deductibles or co-insurance payments. Health care providers and medical facility insurers must accept the following rates for out-of-plan treatment:

- If insurers have a contract with a provider or facility: contracted rate even if the patient is not in a network that covers the provider or facility
- If insurer has no contract with a provider or facility: 135 percent of the applicable Medicare rate
- Insurers may not balance bill, or charge, patients for amounts above the above specified payments.

[Read the Order](#)

**COVID-19 Demographic Data:** The Department of Public Health (DPH) today issued an order designed to expand COVID-19 demographic reporting data, including race and ethnicity, to address disparities in the virus' impact and support the Commonwealth's COVID-19 response efforts. This order mandates all health care providers and labs to collect and report complete demographic information of confirmed or suspected COVID-19 patients. [Read the Order.](#)

**Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Resources:** The Baker-Polito Administration today announced the expansion of SafeLink, the Commonwealth's statewide, 24/7, toll-free and confidential domestic violence hotline to now include resources and support for survivors of sexual assault. Previously, SafeLink served as a hotline to specifically connect domestic violence survivors to services. This expansion of services will allow SafeLink to triage calls to local area rape crisis centers and create a centralized number for any survivor of domestic violence or sexual assault to call and receive services during the COVID-19 public health emergency. This hotline is designed for crisis intervention support for those who need assistance in safety planning measures for both themselves and their families. This resource is now available through the 2-1-1 line as an additional method for victims to access help and resources.

The SafeLink toll-free number is (877) 785-2020. For the hearing-impaired, the SafeLink TTY number is (877) 521-2601. Advocates are available in English and Spanish and can provide translation in more than 130 languages.

If you are experiencing violence within your home or concerned about a loved one that may be experiencing violence, please call the SafeLink hotline for support and resources.

If you are in immediate danger, please call 9-1-1.

**CARES Act Unemployment Benefit Implementation:** The Baker-Polito Administration earlier today announced details for the initial implementation of federal unemployment benefits in the CARES Act, the federal based COVID-19 relief package. Understanding the great urgency of Commonwealth residents to access these benefits, DUA has issued new guidance to instruct all qualifying residents of what actions they can now take to access CARES Act benefit programs. These new unemployment benefit programs include:

- Retroactive and continuing additional \$600 per week for regular unemployment compensation for eligible claimants. **This program is being implemented now.**
- Expanded support for people not traditionally covered in the unemployment system, such as self-employed or gig economy workers. **DUA is building a platform to implement this program, which will be available soon.**
- 13-week extension of benefits for individuals who have exhausted previous unemployment benefits. **DUA continues to await federal implementation guidance for this program.**

[Read More](#)

The Baker-Polito Administration will continue to update the public on developments related to COVID-19. Residents can visit [www.mass.gov/covid19](http://www.mass.gov/covid19) for the latest information, call 2-1-1 with questions, and text "COVIDMA" to 888-777 to subscribe to text-alert updates.

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