

Thursday, July 23, 2020

COVID-19 Command Center

Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency

Situation Update

Note: The Command Center Situation Report will be published on a Tuesday/Thursday Schedule.

State Actions in Today's Report:

- Baker-Polito Administration Awards \$3 Million in Food Security Grants
- COVID-19 Testing Billing Protections for Uninsured Individuals
- Public Health Data: Daily Dashboard
- Emergency Management and Disaster Recovery Updates
- Update on Mobile Testing Numbers
- Situation Update on Holyoke and Chelsea Soldiers' Homes



The Baker-Polito Administration visited the Salvation Army in Lynn yesterday to announce new food security grants. The Salvation Army, with support from the Administration and communities throughout Massachusetts, has distributed more than 8 million meals since March.

Helpful Links:

- mass.gov/findfoodhelp
- [Stop the Spread](#)
- [Reopening Massachusetts](#)
- [Mass.Gov/covid19](#)
- [Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency](#)
- [Unemployment & COVID-19](#)
- [Dept. Of Transitional Assistance Online Portal](#)
- [FrontlineMA.org](#)
- [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 7/23**

107,683 Total Confirmed Cases ([click here for more information](#))

8,265 Deaths among confirmed cases

1,079,288 individuals tested for the virus to date by MA State Public Health Laboratory, hospitals and commercial laboratories.

United States **Last Updated 7/23**

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:

3,952,273 Total Cases

142,755 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.

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State Actions

Baker-Polito Administration Awards \$3 Million in Food Security Grants ([News Release](#))

The Baker-Polito Administration announced nearly \$3 million in grants to address urgent food insecurity for Massachusetts residents as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and make the Commonwealth's food system more resilient. This funding is being awarded as part of the first 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 Administration also announced the first round of new vendors for the Healthy Incentives Program (HIP), funded through \$5 million in additional funds recommended by the Food Security Task Force. Thirty-nine new vendors were selected based on their ability to respond to the needs of populations and communities most significantly impacted by the pandemic including communities of color and older adults, serve areas designated as food deserts or low-access areas, and reach SNAP client populations disproportionately impacted by COVID-19.

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 Massachusetts families and individuals as a result of COVID-19. The Administration also announced \$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.

The Administration today also launched a food assistance decision tree, to help residents in need determine which programs they might be eligible for. This tool can be accessed at mass.gov/findfoodhelp.

Food Security Infrastructure Grant Program

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

The first round of the grant program includes 26 awards totaling \$2,941,838 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.

Applications will continue to be evaluated on a rolling basis through September 15, 2020. 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

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planning, technical assistance and information technology services. The Request for Responses for project proposals is available [here](#).

Healthy Incentives Program New Vendors

The Healthy Incentives Program (HIP) provides matching benefits for SNAP households who purchase locally grown produce from participating Massachusetts vendors. HIP vendors include farm stands, farmers markets, mobile markets, and CSA farm share programs. Learn more at mass.gov/HIP.

The majority of the newly selected HIP vendors are local, small-scale farmers who live in or have close ties to the communities and populations they intend to serve, while other selected applicants are local agricultural vendors with demonstrated capacity to serve high-need communities through delivery, mobile markets, and targeted outreach. Sixty-six percent of the selected vendors will serve families in a Gateway City, 49% of the selected vendors will serve multiple communities, and 23% will expand access to towns with no HIP vendors in 2019. The Department of Transitional Assistance received 90 applications in response to a Notice of Opportunity [announced](#) on June 11.

COVID-19 Testing Billing Protections for Uninsured Individuals

Yesterday, the Baker-Polito Administration issued a public health order to prevent uninsured individuals from receiving surprise bills and copays because of a COVID-19 test.

The federal Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) provides a number of protections for insured individuals, including a requirement that providers must provide COVID-19 testing without imposing any cost-sharing requirements on the individual.

Currently, providers can submit claims for reimbursement related to COVID-19 testing for uninsured individuals to the COVID-19 Claims Reimbursement to Health Care Providers and Facilities for Testing and Treatment of the [Uninsured Program](#), administered by the federal Health Resources and Services Administration. When providers choose to submit reimbursement claims to the portal, the same protections in the FFCRA apply to uninsured individuals.

The Commonwealth has received reports of some providers choosing not to bill the portal, leading to uninsured individuals receiving, at times, large bills for testing.

Yesterday's public health order, signed by Department of Public Health Commissioner Monica Bharel, requires that when testing uninsured individuals, providers either bill the federal uninsured portal for reimbursement or provide the test at no cost to the individual.

Ensuring access to testing for insured and uninsured individuals is critical to stopping the spread of COVID-19.

The public health order can be found [here](#).

COVID-19 Public Health Update

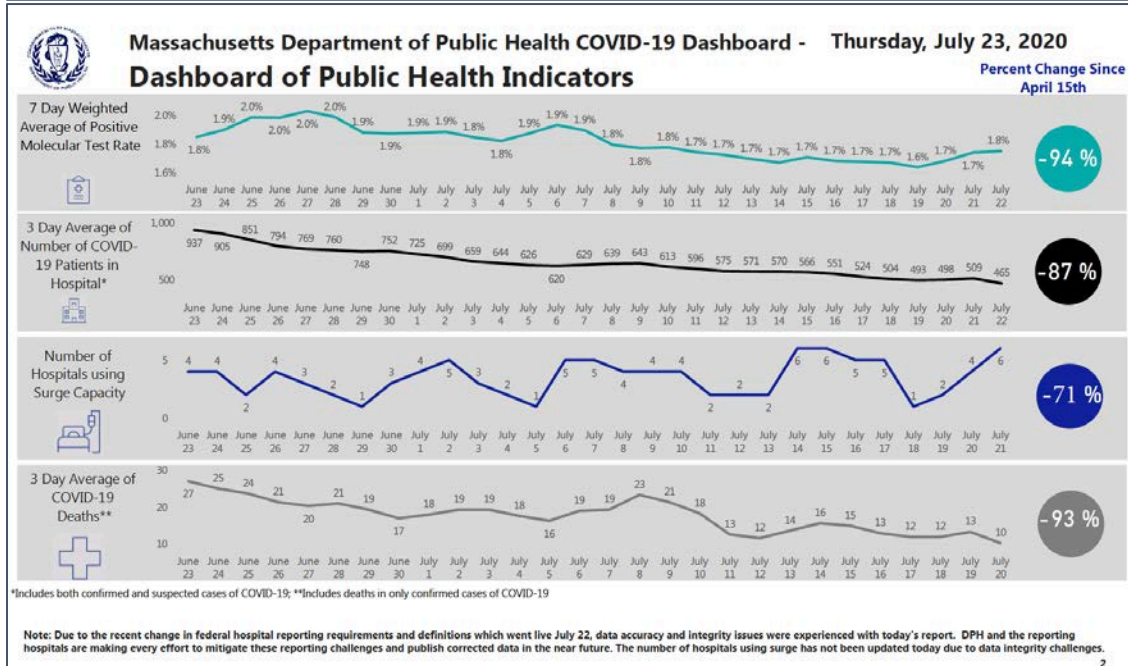
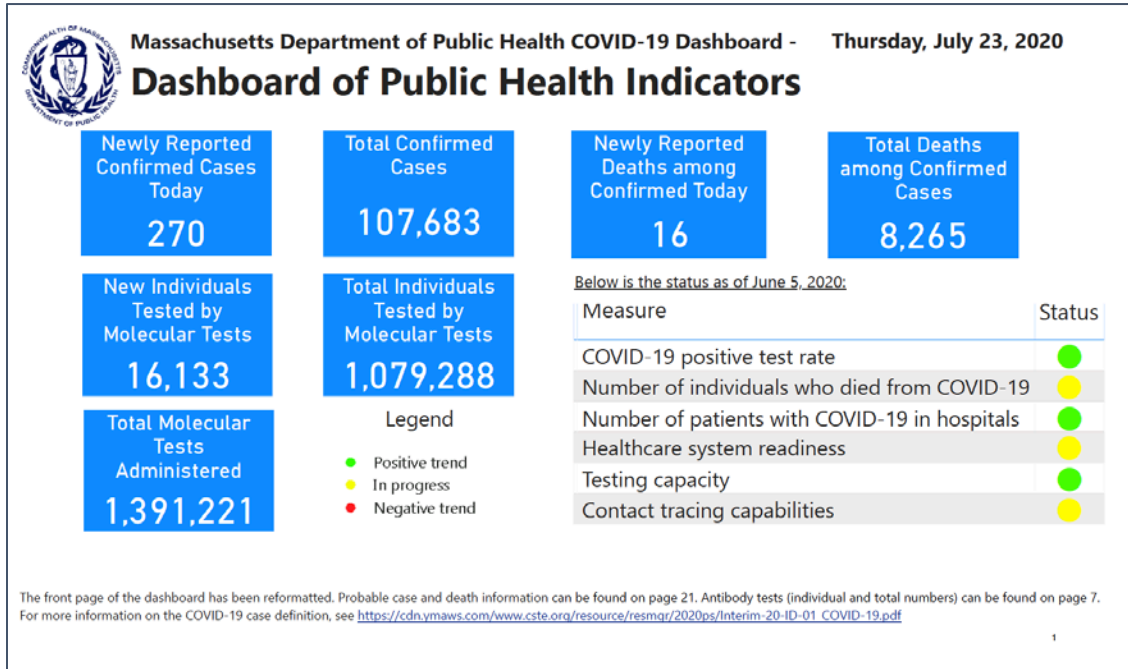
Testing Update:

Today, more than **16,133** new molecular (viral) tests were reported in Massachusetts with **270** newly reported confirmed positive cases. Yesterday, more than **10,700** new tests were reported to DPH, bringing the total molecular tests administered to date to more than **1,369,551**.

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Hospitalizations & Capacity Update:

As of today, **351** people are hospitalized, with **59** reported to be in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU). Key indicators from today's Daily Dashboard are below. **Note:** Due to the recent change in federal hospital reporting requirements and definitions which went live July 22, data accuracy and integrity issues were experienced with today's report. DPH and the reporting hospitals are making every effort to mitigate these reporting challenges and publish corrected data in the near future. The number of hospitals using surge has not been updated today due to data integrity challenges.



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Additional Updates:

- The Department of Public Health hosted a 7/21 inter-agency call with representatives from Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), Department of Labor Standards, Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, and Massachusetts Association of Health Boards to provide updates and answer questions related to Phase III, Step 1 of Reopening Massachusetts with local health officials and other participants.
- DPH also Conducted 7/22 call with long term care facilities to provide COVID-19 updates and answer questions about Phase III Reopening and other COVID-19 related topics.

Important Updates

Emergency Management and Disaster Recovery Updates:

Mass Care

- 2 state contracted quarantine/isolation hotels in the communities of Northampton and Everett continue to receive client placements.
 - Currently 16 residents are housed in these hotels (change of +3 since last Friday)
 - These hotels will continue to operate into August to support the “Stop the Spread” testing initiative.
- A total of 126,907 meals have been distributed to date through state contracted hotel sites and distributions of food boxes and meal bags.
- Today, MEMA conducted a virtual presentation on the *Guidance for Mass Care Operations in a Pandemic Environment* document for state partners and communities in MEMA Region 2 (Southeast).
- Tent operations supporting homeless individuals continue in Haverhill.

Logistics (including Personal Protective Equipment and Supplies)

- To date, MEMA and MDPH, with assistance from the MA National Guard and other agencies, have supplied over 19.3 million pieces of PPE to hospitals, first responders, nursing homes, state agencies, and others.
- MEMA’s State Logistics Warehouse continues to support PPE requests to cities, towns, state agencies, non-profit organizations, and COVID-19 isolation hotels.
- The warehouse has supported 4,510 missions since opening in early March, and has processed 63 over the last two days.
- The warehouse is still supporting larger distributions of PPE to cities and towns, which began this past week and will continue for the next several weeks.
- DPH has scheduled 27 allocations of PPE and/or testing supplies for delivery to health care entities between Wednesday 7/22 and Friday 7/24. Beginning next week, DPH is shifting to a twice a week schedule with deliveries made on Tuesday and Friday only, unless a facility reports an urgent need for PPE or 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:

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- Continuing to provide technical assistance to project applicants.
- Total FEMA RPA Applicants: 534 (+9 since Friday)
- Total # Obligated Projects: 14 / \$7,051,142.38 (+2 / +\$ 5,634,805.71 since Friday)
- Total # of Payments Disbursed: 1 / \$51,568.28 (no change since Friday)
- Online Applicant Technical Assistant Requests: 412 (+7 since Friday)
- FEMA approved an extension for Crisis Counseling Immediate Services Program (ISP) by 30 days (to August 24, 2020) and increased the amount of the federal award from \$479,490.56 to \$707,506.62 (an increase of \$228,016.06).

“Stop the Spread” Testing Sites Continue in 8 Communities

Free COVID-19 testing sites are open in eight communities as part of the Baker-Polito Administration’s “Stop the Spread” initiative. These sites will remain open until August 14 to help stop the spread of COVID-19 in communities that are above the state average in total cases and positive test rate, and have experienced a decline in testing levels since April. Residents of the communities of Chelsea, Everett, Fall River, Lawrence, Lowell, Lynn, Marlborough, and New Bedford are urged to take advantage of the availability of these new testing sites, even if they are asymptomatic. While these sites were launched in these communities, they are open to all residents of the Commonwealth. Visit mass.gov/stophespread to find out more.

Update on Mobile Testing Numbers for Long Term Care, Assisted Living Residences and EOHHS Sites

Note: The Family Resource Line is available Monday-Friday, from 9 am to 5 pm.

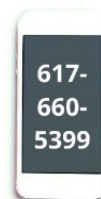
Onsite Testing: Long Term Care

Date	Number of Tests Completed	Unique Facilities Visited
Total (as of 6/15)	57,058	493

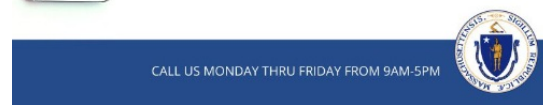
COVID-19 Cases in Long-Term Care (LTC) Facilities (as of 7/22)	
Residents/Healthcare Workers of LTC Facilities	23,956
LTC Facilities Reporting at Least One Case of COVID-19	369
Deaths Reported in LTC Facilities	5,398

Mobile Testing at EOHHS Group Homes & Care Sites (as of 7/20 by Fallon Ambulance Service)

DDS, DMH, DCF and DPH Facilities	
Clients	12,804
Staff	18,122
Total Tests	30,926
Number of Locations	2,063



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



Holyoke Soldiers’ Home Update (as of 7/22):

- The Soldiers’ Home in Holyoke continues to welcome families and loved ones for outdoor visitation with veterans, offered Tuesday through Saturday, with 20 slots available each day. Visits are scheduled in advance using the Family Line.

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- The Soldiers' Home is following [visitation guidance](#) using outdoor visitation protocols that prioritize the health and safety of our Veterans and staff with continued focus on infection control. This plan will be 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 alongside continued video visits, and 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.
- Residents are actively continuing their recovery, and the health status of veterans has seen marked improvement. If there is any sign of COVID-like symptoms, residents are retested.
- The Home is continuing recreational activities for Veterans, respecting social distancing, and veterans continue to go outside with nursing and recreation staff. The Soldiers' Home has resumed offering religious services onsite, limiting size, respecting social distancing, and hosting outside weather permitting.
- 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 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.
- Phase 1 of the refresh project, which involved updating the interiors of the 3rd floor units for enhanced infection control, is nearing completion this month.
- 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.
- **The current status as of July 22 is as follows:**
 - The current status of all residents:
 - 0 veterans are positive across the Home and those at Holyoke Medical Center
 - 62 veterans are negative
 - 82 veterans have recovered, meaning they previously tested positive and are now clinically recovered
 - 0 veterans have a pending test result
 - 1 veteran has refused testing
 - Resident locations:
 - 119 veterans are onsite
 - 26 veterans are offsite
 - 25 veterans are at a dedicated skilled nursing unit at Holyoke Medical Center
 - 1 veteran is receiving acute care offsite

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- Since March 1, there have been 101 veteran deaths (76 deaths of veterans who tested positive, 20 veterans who tested negative, 1 veteran whose status was unknown, 4 veterans were clinically recovered)
- Employees at the Home have been retested and all are clinically recovered.

Chelsea Soldiers' Home Update (as of 7/22)

- The Chelsea Soldiers' Home continues to welcome visitors for outdoor visitation between veterans and loved ones. Following visitation guidance, the Home has protocols that prioritize the health and safety of our 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.
- The Soldiers' Home in Chelsea monitors the PPE supply, and continues to receive shipments of PPE including gloves, masks, eye protection, gowns, and shoe covers. 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 current status as of July 22 is as follows:**
 - Residents
 - 0 veteran residents are positive
 - 152 veteran residents have tested negative
 - 43 residents have recovered, meaning they previously tested positive and are now clinically recovered
 - 43 veteran resident deaths (31 tested positive, 11 tested negative, 1 clinically recovered)
 - Employees:
 - All employees have been retested and have been determined clinically recovered
 - 2 employees have pending tests
 - 61 employees have been determined clinically recovered

Resources

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:

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- 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 on a daily basis 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.

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Please share our Communications Resources

NEW: The DPH video “*How to Safely Cover Your Face Outside of Home*” is now available in Spanish, Portuguese, Simplified Chinese, Traditional Chinese, Haitian Creole and Vietnamese. Please share! ([Find The Videos Here](#))



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
- Stay Home. 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

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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. As part of our nation's critical infrastructure, healthy individuals can still donate in areas that have issued shelter in place declarations. 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