

Monday, March 30, 2020

COVID-19 Response Command Center

Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency

Situation Update

State Actions in Today's Report:

- Expedited Onboarding of Health Care Volunteers
- On-Demand Licensing for Health Professionals
- Expanding Care Capacity Through Designated Skilled Nursing Facilities
- Financial Relief for Care Providers
- Temporary Adjustment to Shareholder Meeting Requirements

Numbers in Focus:

- **505 programs** have been approved as Emergency Childcare Centers for COVID-19 Essential Workforce members.
- **2,255 children** were reported **in attendance today**. EEC has continued to see this number rise since the program launched. Visit the [Department of Early Education & Care website](#) for more information.
- **Mass 2-1-1** has answered more than **23,700 calls from residents** since its activation.
- More than **180,000** people have signed up for text notifications by texting **COVIDMA** to **888-777**.

Helpful Links:

- [Mass.Gov/covid19](https://www.mass.gov/covid19)
- [Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency](#)
- [Unemployment & COVID-19](#)
- [Dept. Of Transitional Assistance Online Portal](#)
- [Emergency Childcare Site](#)
- [MBTA.com/covid19](https://www.mbta.com/covid19)
- [COVID-19 Cost Eligibility and Tracking Guidance](#)
- [Complete List of Emergency Orders & Guidance](#)

Background on the Command Center:

On March 10, 2020, Governor Charlie Baker declared a State of Emergency to support the Commonwealth's response to coronavirus.

On March 14, the Baker-Polito Administration announced the creation of a new COVID-19 Response Command Center. Secretary Marylou Sudders is leading the cross-secretariat response to the outbreak. The Command Center is the Commonwealth's single point of strategic decision making and coordination for the Administration's comprehensive COVID-19 response.

In support of the Command Center, the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) in Framingham has activated to Level 2 (Partial Activation). In addition, MEMA's Regional EOCs in Tewksbury, New Bedford, and Agawam have also been partially activated to support local communities.



Situation in Numbers

Massachusetts **current as of 3/30**
5,752 Total Cases ([click for more information](#))

56 Deaths

42,793 patients tested to date by MA State Public Health Laboratory, hospitals and commercial laboratories.

United States **current as of 3/30**

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:

140,904 Total Cases

2,405 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

At a 1 pm press conference, Governor Baker, Lt. Governor Polito, and Secretary Sudders provided several updates and announcements: ([News Release](#)) ([See Video of Today's Briefing](#))

Expedited Onboarding Of Health Care Volunteers:

Last week, the Administration [launched an initiative to recruit volunteer medical professionals](#) to support hospitals as the Commonwealth continues to expand medical capacity. Since launching the initiative, more than 1,800 volunteers have already signed up, reflective of the Commonwealth's world-class health care workforce. To support expedited onboarding of these volunteers, the Department of Public Health has issued an order authorizing the Office of Preparedness and Emergency Management to perform a CORI check on any volunteer who registered through the volunteer portal without a notarized CORI acknowledgement form. The Order requires any entity performing a CORI check pursuant to the Order to implement sufficient compensating controls to reasonably verify an individual's identity, including inspection of a photographic form of government issued identification via teleconference. [Read the Order.](#)

On-Demand Licensing For Health Professionals:

To further support the Commonwealth's health care workforce, the Department of Public Health has issued an order designed to provide on-demand licensing and re-licensing for certain health care professionals. The Order expedites licensing for professionals with licenses in good standing in other states, and professionals who have allowed their Massachusetts licenses to expire within the past 10 years while in good standing. This order applies to a wide range of health professionals: registered nurse, licensed practical nurse, advanced practice registered nurse, dentist, dental hygienist, dental assistant, pharmacist, pharmacy technician, nursing home administrator, physician assistant, respiratory therapist, perfusionist, genetic counselor, community health worker and emergency medical technician. [Read the Order.](#)

Expanding Care Capacity:

As part of its efforts to expand existing health care capacity, the Administration's COVID-19 Response Command Center is working with long-term care facilities to establish dedicated skilled nursing facilities to care for individuals infected with COVID-19. The initiative offers an alternative location where individuals who are stable but still need medical care can be transferred to recover, relieving pressure on hospitals and opening up hospital beds for the treatment of patients with the greatest medical need. The transfer of existing residents out of participating facilities will be handled with the utmost care. The Administration has received federal approval from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) for this initiative.

The Department of Public Health has issued an order waiving certain MassHealth regulations regarding the transfers and discharge of long-term care facility residents, for the limited purpose of safely transferring and discharging all residents living in a long-term care facility that is intended to be used as a designated COVID-19 facility. The Command Center has worked with the Beaumont Rehabilitation and Skilled Nursing Center in Worcester to start this effort, which will help bring 300 skilled nursing facility beds online in central Massachusetts. The Command Center will continue to work with long-term care facilities to add care capacity for older adults. [Read the Order.](#)

[Read the letter to providers outlining the program.](#)

Financial Relief for Care Providers:

Governor Baker today issued an order providing the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) administrative flexibility to extend financial relief to providers of critical health care and social services that serve EOHHS clients, including members of MassHealth. The financial relief may be in the form of temporary rate adjustments, supplemental payments, and new rate and payment methodologies that reflect the modified ways services are being delivered. These measures will be subject to the approval of the Secretary of the Executive Office for Administration and Finance. This will allow EOHHS to extend critical financial support to:

- Providers that are facing extraordinary demand due to the COVID-19 emergency, while, at the same time, have lost significant revenue because they have had to cancel other procedures and appointments;
- Providers that are necessary to keep vulnerable individuals safe in their homes or residences and out of more acute settings like hospitals; and
- Human service providers that have been forced to respond to the unanticipated circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic by altering the way they deliver services and the hours and scope of these services.

[Read the Order.](#)

Shareholder Meeting Requirements:

Under Massachusetts law, public companies can permit shareholders and their proxies to participate in annual or special shareholder meetings by remote communication, but they are also required to hold a meeting in a physical space that shareholders can attend in person. Given the challenges of meeting such requirements while non-essential workers are required to stay home and gatherings are limited to 10 people, Governor Baker today issued an order adjusting this meeting requirement. The Governor's order permits public companies to hold annual or special shareholder meetings completely by means of remote communication, until 60 days after the end of the state of emergency. [Read the Order.](#)

Other Important Information

CVS Shrewsbury, MA COVID-19 Testing Site:

The drive-thru COVID-19 testing site for first responders and medical professionals located in Shrewsbury, MA is currently **closed** while it undergoes a deep cleaning process.

Ongoing Blood Product Shortage

The Red Cross is facing a [critical shortage of blood products](#) due to cancellations of blood drives across the Commonwealth because of implementation of necessary prevention and mitigation actions during COVID-19 outbreak. The Governor has deemed "Blood and plasma donors and the employees of the organizations that operate and manage related activities" as an essential service.

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](https://www.redcrossblood.org), or calling 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767). To schedule a new blood drive contact Bill Forsyth at (617) 699-3808 or email William.Forsyth@redcross.org.

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
- 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.

Communications Resources:

- DPH Flyer/Infographic on [reducing stress & coping](#) with fear of COVID-19
- DMH resources on [maintaining Emotional Health & Well-Being](#)
- Social Distancing ([youth](#) and [general](#)) infographic released on website.
- Social Distancing messages are now on billboards and will soon be available on public transit. They are also now translated into multiple languages.
- MA Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (MCDHH) [visual tool](#) for communicating with hard of hearing and Deaf individuals.

COVID-2019 infographic for posting in all public places: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/stop-the-spread-of-germs-respiratory-diseases-like-flu-and-covid-19/download>

Social media – follow and retweet DPH on Twitter @MassDPH, updated several times per day.