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Baker-Polito Administration Announces Travel Guidelines and New Health Care Resources To Support COVID-19 Response

BOSTON – Today, the Baker-Polito Administration announced new COVID-19 public health emergency responses issuing new guidelines on travel and transportation, and offering further support for health care professionals and patients.

Earlier today, Governor Charlie Baker, Lt. Governor Karyn Polito, Senate President Karen Spilka and House Speaker Robert DeLeo also announced an agreement to extend the 2019 state individual income tax filing and payment deadline from April 15 to July 15, matching the July 15 deadline for filing federal individual income taxes. More details are available [here](#).

Travel Guidance: Beginning March 27, all travelers arriving to Massachusetts are instructed to self-quarantine for 14 days. This guidance will be displayed as posters at service plazas along 1-90 eastbound, distributed as flyers at major transportation hubs and on posted on highway message boards. Visitors are instructed not to travel to Massachusetts if they are displaying symptoms. Health care workers, public health workers, public safety workers, transportation workers and designated essential workers are exempt from this requirement.

Medical School Graduation: Health and Human Services Secretary Marylou Sudders and DPH Commissioner Dr. Monica Bharel have coordinated with Massachusetts medical schools to facilitate early graduation of their qualified fourth-year students to allow graduates to support the health care workforce during the COVID-19 response. This coordinated effort includes Boston University School of Medicine, University of Massachusetts Medical School, Tufts University School of Medicine and Harvard Medical School.

Emergency Limited Medical Licenses: The Board of Registration in Medicine will provide medical school graduates who have matched as an intern, resident or fellow with a Board-approved Massachusetts health care facility or training program with Emergency 90-Day Limited Licenses to

practice medicine to ensure that our health care workforce is prepared during the COVID-19 public health emergency.

To qualify, medical residents must fill out an application to be approved by the program or facility, and once approved, residents will receive the emergency license and be able to start when their program begins. This Emergency Limited License will allow medical staff to provide support while the regular screening progresses, and it is not a substitute for the regular Limited License process.

Buoy Health Care Tool: The Baker-Polito Administration announced the launch of Buoy Health's new online resource for residents to check their symptoms and connect with the next appropriate health care resource. This tool does not replace emergency medical care, but it may be used as a support for residents during the COVID-19 outbreak to connect them with appropriate health care resources if they display coronavirus symptoms.

Buoy Health's online 24/7 tool is free for Massachusetts residents and uses current COVID-19 guidance from the CDC and Massachusetts Department of Public Health. Visit [Buoy.com/mass](https://buoy.com/mass) to learn more and use the tool.

Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs): The administration has issued a public health order to provide APRNs in good standing with greater flexibility in their prescribing practices. This order includes the following updates:

- Certified nurse midwives will be allowed to continue to prescribe as already authorized.
- Authorizes APRNs who have at least two years of supervised practice experience to prescribe without physician supervision.
- Authorizes APRNs with fewer than two years of supervised practice experience to prescribe with physician supervision, but without the normally required written guidelines.

Read the order [here](#).

MassHealth Waiver: The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) has approved, in part, the Baker-Polito Administration's [1135 waiver](#) to fast-track MassHealth enrollment, streamline administrative requirements for providers and better deliver critically needed health care services during the COVID-19 public health emergency. CMS has approved the following items of the waiver:

- Enrollment of out-of-state providers and easing other provider requirements when enrolling in MassHealth.
- Allowing providers to be reimbursed for care in alternative, unlicensed settings.
- Suspension of prior authorization requirements and extending pre-existing prior authorizations through the emergency.

Health Care Professional Volunteers: To support ongoing COVID-19 emergency response efforts, the Baker-Polito Administration has partnered with the Massachusetts Medical Society to match volunteers with our communities and health care providers based on skillsets and need. There is an immediate need for respiratory therapists and public health nurses, and the administration is

asking health care professionals interested in volunteering to sign up at MAResponds.org.

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