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Massachusetts Dedicates Former Hospital for Shelter, Treatment of Homeless Individuals

Newton Pavilion building to be used for care of homeless residents

BOSTON – To ensure the care and safety of the Boston area’s homeless population during the COVID-19 epidemic, the Baker-Polito Administration today announced that a former Boston Medical Center hospital building will be temporarily reopened and used to meet COVID-19 related medical needs of area homeless residents.

The building, known as Newton Pavilion, is currently owned by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The new facility will be operated by a consortium of providers, including Boston Medical Center, Boston Healthcare for the Homeless, shelters including the Pine Street Inn, and the City of Boston’s COVID-19 response team.

“As we continue to urge residents to stay at home, it’s vitally important to provide for the safety of individuals who don’t have a place to call home,” **said Governor Charlie Baker.** “We continue to take steps to protect the health and safety of all residents, particularly our more vulnerable residents including older adults, individuals with underlying health conditions, and individuals experiencing homelessness.”

“This action is a critical protection for the health care needs of individuals experiencing homelessness, a population at high risk for the virus that needs a place to recover safely in cases of mild illness,” **said Secretary of Health and Human Services Marylou Sudders.**

The facility will be able to be used as needed for a range of care needs, potentially including treatment of homeless patients who:

- Are confirmed COVID-19 positive with mild symptoms who do not require hospitalization but do require isolation from the general population
- Are symptomatic and awaiting test results who require isolation to avoid spreading infection to the general population
- Post-discharge facility for COVID-19 patients who have been hospitalized but who don't have a home to return to
- Acute care for sicker patients, up to and including ICU care

Capacity of the facility can grow with demand to 250 beds, marking a significant increase in clinical capacity to treat homeless individuals who contract COVID-19.

"It's critical that we continue to support our most vulnerable residents, especially our homeless population," **said Boston Mayor Martin J. Walsh.** "In Boston, we are putting in place measures to protect shelter guests and prevent the virus from spreading, including new facilities for screening, testing and isolating patients, and identifying additional overnight beds in the city. The reopening of the Newton Pavilion at Boston Medical Center will be essential to relieving stress on our health care system and increasing medical care for our homeless population as we continue to respond to this public health crisis."

"This new facility will be a critical asset in our hospital's and our community's ability to care for Boston's homeless patients affected by COVID-19 and in turn will help us prevent further spread of the virus," **said Kate Walsh, President and CEO of Boston Medical Center Health System.** "We applaud and thank Governor Baker and his Administration for taking this crucial step and are grateful for the partnership of our fellow providers in this effort."

"This is a huge step forward in ensuring that our patients and the City's homeless community are able to get the care they will need and deserve in the weeks and months ahead," **said Barry Bock, CEO of Boston Health Care for the Homeless.** "We're ready and eager to work closely in partnership with our fellow providers to make this new facility a reality, and we're so grateful to Governor Baker for his leadership in making this possible,"

"We are very grateful to the Governor and Secretary Sudders for designating this building as a site for homeless individuals during this crisis. This site will be crucial in helping contain the spread of this virus in our community," **said Lyndia Downie, President of Pine Street Inn.** "I want to thank our partners in the fight, Boston Medical Center and Boston Health Care for the Homeless, for the work they are doing to get this building operational."

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