

# Thursday, October 8, 2020

## COVID-19 Command Center

### Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency

## Situation Update

The Command Center Situation Report is published weekly on Thursdays.



Governor Baker and Lt. Governor Polito provided a COVID-19 update in Salem on Tuesday, and announced an additional \$1 million in [Shared Streets & Spaces](#) grants with Mayor Kim Driscoll, and Transportation Secretary Pollack.

### In This Week's Report:

- Latest Data: Public Health Update
- Week in Review: Key State Actions
  - New Round of Long-Term Care Facility Reforms & Support
  - COVID-19 Vaccine Advisory Group Announced
  - New Behavioral Health Campaign Launched
  - DPH, Emergency Management, and Disaster Recovery Updates
  - Holyoke and Chelsea Soldiers' Homes Weekly Update

### Helpful Links:

- [Stop COVID-19](#)
- [State Guidance for Municipalities](#)
- [COVID-19 Travel Order](#)
- [Returning to School Safely](#)
- [Mass.gov/findfoodhelp](#)
- [Stop the Spread](#)
- [Reopening Massachusetts](#)
- [Mass.Gov/covid19](#)
- [Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency](#)
- [Unemployment & COVID-19](#)
- [Dept. Of Transitional Assistance Online Portal](#)
- [Emergency Childcare Site](#)
- [COVID-19 Cost Eligibility and Tracking Guidance](#)



## Situation in Numbers

Massachusetts **current as of 10/8**

134,277 Total Confirmed Cases ([click here for more information](#))

9,350 Deaths among confirmed cases

2,360,825 individuals tested for the virus to date by MA State Public Health Laboratory, hospitals and commercial laboratories.

United States **Last Updated 10/8**

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:

7,528,313 Total Cases

211,132 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:

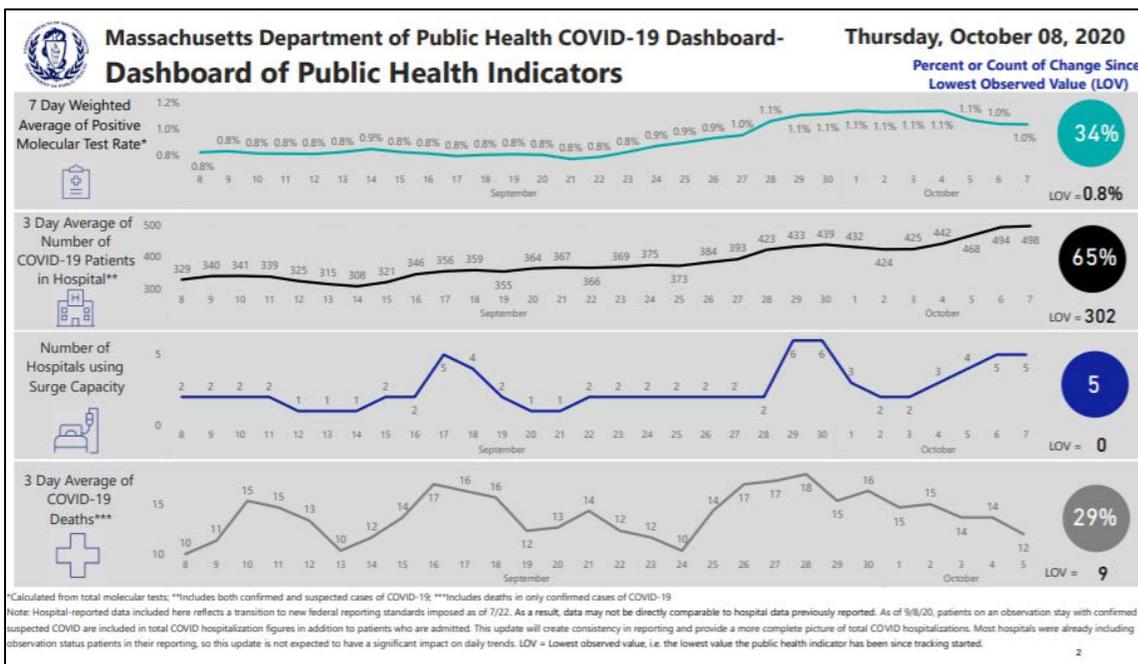
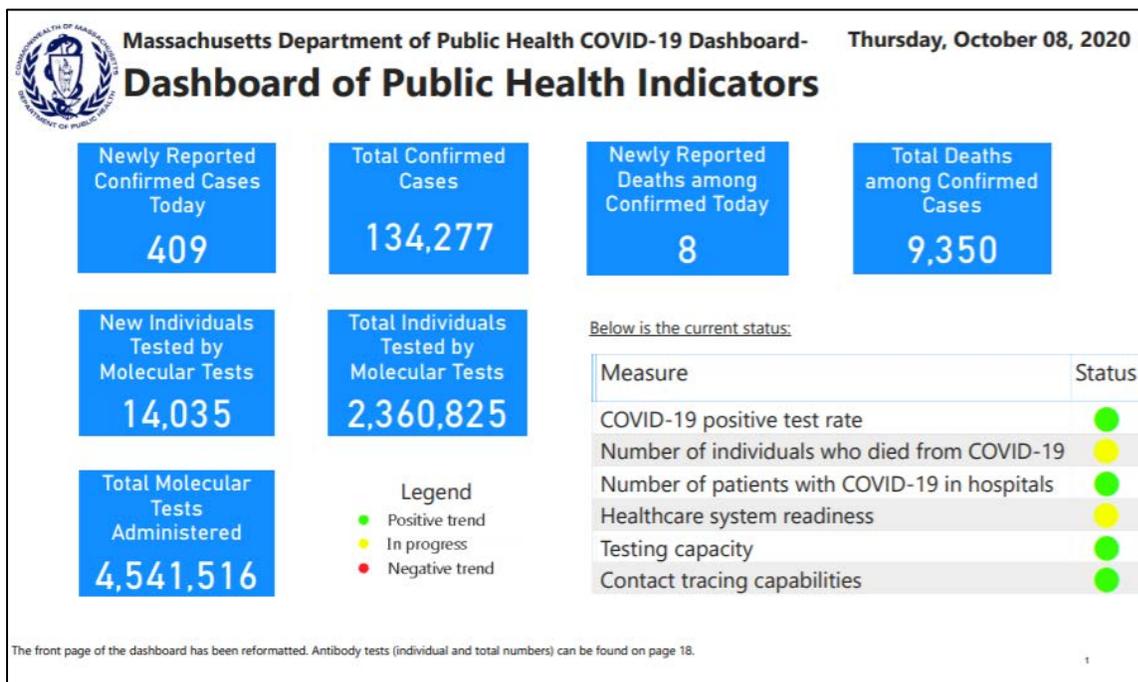
- ✓ Avoid crowds
- ✓ Stay 6 feet away from others
- ✓ Don't shake hands or hug
- ✓ Wear a face covering or mask if physical distancing is not possible.

## Latest Data: COVID-19 Public Health Update

### Testing Update:

Today, over **14,000** new individuals tested by molecular (viral) tests were reported in Massachusetts with **409** newly reported confirmed positive cases. The total molecular tests administered to date is over **4.5 million**.

**Hospitalizations & Capacity Update:** As of today, **484** people are hospitalized, with **85** reported to be in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU). Key indicators from today's Daily Dashboard are below.



# COVID-19 RESPONSE COMMAND CENTER WEEKLY SITUATION REPORT

## **New Weekly Public Health Data Report Released**

Yesterday, the Command Center released the comprehensive [COVID-19 Weekly Public Health Report](#), including community-specific COVID-19 case and testing data. The report also includes risk categories for each city and town based on the average daily incident rate over the past 14 days. [Communities in the high-risk category](#) will receive additional support from the Commonwealth through a cross-agency COVID Enforcement and Intervention Team (CEIT).

The report also includes information on nursing facility staff baseline testing, infection control audits, and more. You can also find information related to contact tracing by local boards of health, and the Community Tracing Collaborative. All the data reports, and raw data files, are available by visiting the [COVID-19 Response Reporting page](#).

## ***Week in Review: State Actions***

### **Administration Announces Continued Efforts to Support Older Adults; Launches Second Round of Nursing Home Reforms; Strengthens Staff Flu Vaccine Requirements**

The Baker-Polito Administration has begun implementing its second round of comprehensive nursing home reforms to keep older adults safe, improve the standards of care and infection control, and respond to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. As part of the Accountability and Supports Package 2.0 [announced](#) in September, the first phase includes \$82 million in restructured Medicaid rates and immediate steps to eliminate 3 and 4 bed rooms in nursing homes. In addition, the state released updated surveillance testing guidance for nursing homes and rest homes and announced new funding for assisted living residences (ALRs) to support surveillance testing.



The Administration also announced strengthened flu vaccine requirements for staff at nursing homes, rest homes, ALRs, adult day health programs, and dialysis units to protect vulnerable residents and providers.

Over 55,500 older adults live in 700 nursing homes, rest homes, and ALRs in Massachusetts. The Administration has taken significant action to support these residents throughout the COVID-19 emergency, and the actions announced today reinforce the state's commitment to improving care for these residents both during the pandemic and long-term.

### **Nursing Facility Accountability and Supports Package 2.0**

The Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) is implementing the first phase of several significant reforms announced as part of [the Accountability and Supports Package 2.0](#) in September. This package of reforms holds long term care facilities to higher standards of care and infection control, provides up to \$140 million in additional funding to nursing homes, and restructures Medicaid rates to be consistent with the recommendations of the [Nursing Facility Taskforce](#).

This first phase of reforms includes:

## COVID-19 RESPONSE COMMAND CENTER WEEKLY SITUATION REPORT

- Requiring nursing homes to take immediate steps to reduce or eliminate rooms with more than two residents to improve infection control standards and resident quality of life, the first step in eliminating 3 and 4 bedrooms in nursing homes
- \$82 million in restructured Medicaid rates, which incentivize high-quality, high-occupancy, and care for high-acuity special populations, including residents with substance use disorder and/or several mental health diagnoses, while ensuring stability for high-Medicaid facilities
- Strengthened criteria for nursing homes that establish isolation spaces for COVID-19 positive residents being discharged from hospitals, limiting isolation spaces to facilities that have a high DPH quality score, meet specific staffing and PPE requirements and have no deficiencies on DPH infection control surveys

The reforms build off the strong steps Commonwealth has taken since the start of the COVID-19 public health emergency to support nursing home residents and staff. With this package, the Commonwealth has committed over \$400 million in new funding directly to nursing homes, on top of over \$180 million in federal funding. In addition, the state has provided direct staffing supports, provided over 2.8 million pieces of personal protective equipment (PPE), provided testing via mobile testing units and reimbursement for surveillance testing, and enhanced facility accountability through regular infection control surveys and other audits.

### **Long-Term Care Surveillance Testing**

The Administration has updated long-term care staff [surveillance testing guidance](#) to align with federal guidance. Surveillance testing is a critical way for facilities to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 and better protect high-risk residents. The updated guidance ensures all staff are tested at least once each month, with additional testing in facilities with new COVID cases or in high-positivity areas.

While nursing homes and rest homes are required to adhere to the surveillance testing guidance, ALRs are recommended to do so. To further support ALRs in performing adequate surveillance testing, the state [will fund](#) up to two rounds of testing for all staff per 30 days when there is a new staff case in an ALR. Nursing homes and rest homes have been reimbursed for staff surveillance testing since the policy was released in June.

### **Flu Vaccine Requirements**

To protect long-term care residents and other vulnerable populations from a potentially deadly flu season, and preserve health care resources needed to respond to the COVID-19 emergency throughout the fall and winter, the Department of Public Health (DPH) has revised the flu vaccination requirements for staff at nursing homes, rest homes, ALRs, adult day health programs, and out-of-hospital dialysis units. The DPH order eliminates the option for staff to opt-out of getting a flu vaccine, with exemptions only for medical or religious reasons.

Immunization is the most effective method for preventing infection of the flu, and staff at long-term care facilities and other health care providers serving vulnerable populations play an important role in stopping its spread. The order applicable to nursing homes, rest homes, adult day health programs and dialysis can be read [here](#), and the order applicable to ALRs can be read [here](#). For more information on protecting yourself and your family by getting the flu vaccine, visit: <https://www.mass.gov/flu-facts>.

## COVID-19 RESPONSE COMMAND CENTER WEEKLY SITUATION REPORT

### **COVID-19 Vaccine Advisory Group Announced**

The Baker-Polito Administration announced a COVID-19 Vaccine Advisory Group to advance its efforts to prepare to distribute a safe and effective COVID-19 vaccine once it becomes available. (Press release [here](#))

Comprised of medical professionals, public health experts, elected officials, community leaders and infectious disease specialists, the COVID-19 Vaccine Advisory Group will advise the Administration, including the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) and the COVID-19 Command Center, on communication, distribution, and equity issues relating to a COVID-19 vaccine.



The Commonwealth has actively been working on preparedness and planning for a COVID-19 vaccine since early August. This work builds on and enhances the state's experience in distributing approximately 3 million vaccine doses each year. The group will help inform the planning and preparedness work already underway and further strengthen efforts to successfully and equitably allocate, distribute and administer a safe and effective COVID-19 vaccine.

Over the past decade, the Commonwealth has invested in the state-of-the-art Massachusetts Immunization Information System, which serves as the state's vaccine registry, ordering system and inventory mechanism. More than 3,000 provider sites currently report their data to this system, and DPH is actively onboarding an additional 1,000 clinical sites to further enhance the distribution and tracking of a COVID-19 vaccine.

Working closely with DPH leaders, particularly DPH Medical Director Dr. Larry Madoff and DPH Assistant Commissioner Kevin Cranston, members of the COVID-19 Vaccine Advisory Group include (name - place of work):

- **Dr. Paul Biddinger, Chair** - Mass General Brigham
- **Dr. Barry Bloom** - Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health
- **Dr. Vincent Chiang** - Boston Children's Hospital
- **Michael Curry, Esq.** - Massachusetts League of Community Health Centers
- **Dr. Robert Finberg** - University of Massachusetts Medical School
- **State Senator Cindy Friedman** - Chairperson of the Joint Committee on Health Care Financing
- **Dr. Marc Lipsitch** - Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health
- **State Representative Ronald Mariano** – House Majority Leader
- **Wanda McClain** - Brigham and Women's Hospital
- **Dr. Asif Merchant** - Mass Medical Society
- **Mayor Daniel Rivera** - City of Lawrence
- **Dr. John Rocchio** - CVS Health
- **Dr. David Twitchell** - Boston Medical Center
- **Rev. Liz Walker** - Roxbury Presbyterian Church
- **Phoebe Walker** - Franklin Regional Council of Governments
- **Dr. Simone Wildes** - South Shore Hospital
- **Dr. Sharon Wright** - Beth Israel Lahey Health

## COVID-19 RESPONSE COMMAND CENTER WEEKLY SITUATION REPORT

### New Behavioral Health Campaign Launched:

The Baker-Polito Administration and the Massachusetts Legislature are jointly launching a new behavioral health public awareness campaign Tuesday, October 6, 2020. This is the latest in a series of joint efforts in 2020 to address the importance of emotional and mental well-being.



Research shows that symptoms of depression are more than 3-fold higher during the COVID-19 pandemic than before. Lower income, limited savings, and having exposure to more stressors were associated with greater risk of depression symptoms during COVID-19. A recent CDC study finds young adults are experiencing rising levels of anxiety and depression in the wake of COVID-19. The study found that 40% of adults in the U.S. are struggling with behavioral health issues related to the pandemic. (CDC)

This new statewide campaign entitled “More to the Story” focuses on a key message – that words and simple responses like “I’m fine” and “doing OK” can hide what we’re really feeling. *There could be more to the story.*

The campaign helps people spot the signs that something could be wrong and start a conversation that could ultimately make a difference to our loved ones. *We can all Ask, Listen, Encourage, and Check in.*

To engage in the *More to the Story* campaign, visit [mass.gov/moretothestory](https://mass.gov/moretothestory) for more information and follow @MassDMH on Instagram.

## *Important Updates*

### Additional Department of Public Health Updates:

- Nineteen municipalities (Acushnet, Amherst, Brockton, Chelmsford, Dartmouth, Dudley, Holyoke, Hudson, Kingston, Leicester, Malden, Plymouth, Randolph, Southborough, Southbridge, Sunderland, Waltham, Webster, and Woburn) were added to the list of communities in Massachusetts at higher risk for COVID-19 based on the average daily cases per 100,000 residents; other communities currently on the list are Attleboro, Avon, Boston, Chelsea, Dracut, Everett, Framingham, Haverhill, Lawrence, Lowell Lynn, Marlborough, Methuen, Middleton, Nantucket, New Bedford, North Andover, Revere, Springfield, Winthrop, and Worcester.
- DPH’s flu prevention campaign assets are being shared by many partner organizations and fellow state agencies including the state’s Human Resources Division today. It’s more important than ever to get a flu shot this year. Share our [videos](#) or visit our [web page](#).
- The draft [Crisis Standards of Care Planning Guidance for the Covid-19 Pandemic](#) is now posted for public comment. The public can submit comments on the Draft Guidance through 5PM on October 12, 2020 using [this form](#).
- DPH issued an [Order Regarding the Requirement for Certain Personnel To Be Vaccinated Against Influenza Virus](#), revising the flu vaccination requirements for staff at nursing homes, rest homes, [ALRs](#), adult day health programs, and out-of-hospital dialysis units. This order eliminates the option for staff to opt-out of getting a flu vaccine, with exemptions only for medical or religious reasons.
- Issued updated guidance on [COVID-19 surveillance testing requirements to all long term care settings](#), including nursing homes, rest homes and assisted living residences (Effective 10/15/20).

## COVID-19 RESPONSE COMMAND CENTER WEEKLY SITUATION REPORT

- Issued new guidance regarding [Point of Care Testing Devices for Nursing Homes](#) and a [Reporting Template for Submitting Positive and Negative Test Results](#)
- On 10/6, DPH received a shipment of 134,960 Abbott BinaxNOW™ rapid point-of-care tests, which is the first installment of a 2,070,000 allotment of these tests from the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (HHS).

### **Emergency Management and Disaster Recovery Updates:**

#### **Mass Care**

- 1 state contracted quarantine/isolation hotel in the city of Everett continues to receive client placements.
  - Currently 19 residents are housed in this hotel (+2 change since last Thursday)
  - Isolation support will continue in support of the “Stop the Spread” testing initiative.

#### **Logistics (including Personal Protective Equipment and Supplies)**

- 44 orders prepared for delivery or pick up between 10/1 and 10/8
- Sanitizer Stands have been prepared for delivery to DESE for their offices next week
- In support of the CEIT Community Engagement efforts, the warehouse supplied eight locations with 3,790 containers of alcohol-based hand wipes and 55,000 face coverings
- Face covering allocation to “Stop the Spread” test sites started this week, with 1,910,000 masks being allocated to 25 sites.
- Six mass feeding partners are going to be supplied with aprons, heavy duty gloves, and alcohol-based hand wipes next week
- DFS and MANG continue to support State Logistics Warehouse operations with MEMA daily
- DPH coordinated 12 deliveries to health care entities on Tuesday (10/6) (2 PPE/7 testing supplies/3 surplus biohazards bags), and 14 deliveries have been scheduled for Friday (10/9) (2 PPE/12 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:

- Total FEMA RPA Applicants: 624 (+11)
- Total # Obligated Projects: 31 / +\$ 7,805,950.48 (+1 / +\$ 4.970.27)
- Total # of Payments Disbursed: 20 / \$ 6,863,174.69 (+ / +\$)
- Total # of Partial Payments Disbursed: 1 / \$ \$290,237.06 (+0 / +\$ \$45,270.70)
- Online Applicant Technical Assistant Requests: 457 (+6)
- Continuing to provide technical assistance to project applicants.
- Anticipated Costs Being Submitted through RDU: \$645,359,585 (increase of \$47 million from last Thursday due to adjustments made by our team to reflect risk of denial by FEMA and updates made based on documentation and information received from applicants)
- Over 30% increase in project submission from Applicants in response to MEMA’s October 15<sup>th</sup> submission deadline.
- Collaboration with DHCD and A&F to provide outreach to Housing Authorities across the State.

COVID-19 RESPONSE COMMAND CENTER  
WEEKLY SITUATION REPORT

COVID-19 Cases in Long-Term Care (LTC) Facilities (as of 10/8)	
Residents/Healthcare Workers of LTC Facilities	<b>25,155</b>
LTC Facilities Reporting at Least One Case of COVID-19	<b>387</b>
Deaths Reported in LTC Facilities	<b>6,168</b>



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

CALL US MONDAY THRU FRIDAY FROM 9AM-5PM



**Holyoke Soldiers' Home Weekly Update (current as of 10/6/20)**

Note: The Executive Office of Health and Human Services is requiring mandatory COVID-19 testing for public employees at state operated 24/7 facilities, hospitals and congregate care settings beginning Wednesday, September 23. Until there is a safe and effective vaccine for COVID-19, surveillance testing will remain critically important for the safety of staff and residents.

- We are happy to report that Phase I of the Refresh Project to enhance residential units, an important initiative to ensure infection control continues to be met and that care areas are clean, safe, and comfortable is complete. The veterans that on the second floor have successfully and safely moved to their new rooms on the third floor. Phase II of the Refresh Project will begin on the second floor of the Home in the next few weeks.
- 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. Over the past few weeks, the Home welcomed the following new permanent staff:
  - Chief Operating Officer
  - Assistant Director of Nursing
  - In-House Clinical Nurse Educator
  - Occupational Health Nurse, a newly created position
  - Chaplain
  - DCAMM Coordinator
  - Informatics Coordinator
- Starting today, Tuesday, October 6, the Soldiers' Home began welcoming families and loved ones. Indoor visitation, which is replacing outdoor visitation as the weather gets cooler, is taking place in the Home's lobby following an indoor visitation plan that is contingent on the continued stability of infection control and public health metrics
  - Screening of all visitors will continue, including taking the temperature of each visitor and asking a series of questions. Two visitors are allowed per visit, and visitation will take place in the Home's lobby in four separate private areas with 16 slots available each day, Tuesday through Saturday, from 10:00am to 2:30pm.
  - Families and loved ones can schedule visits with veterans in advance using the Family Line.

## COVID-19 RESPONSE COMMAND CENTER WEEKLY SITUATION REPORT

- Visitation is occurring in addition to continued video visits for regular family communication through video chat, and the Family Line is available for ad hoc updates with support from social work and clinical staff. Outdoor visits and video visits can be scheduled by calling the Family Line 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](mailto: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.
- There have been 828 outdoor visits in total with veterans from families and loved ones.
- In addition to mandatory testing at state-operated 24/7 facilities, daily symptom checking and routine staff surveillance are important tools to protect staff, residents and visitors and will remain in place until such time there is a medical breakthrough or a safe and effective vaccine for COVID 19. Staff who are not feeling well are instructed not to come to work and to contact their health care provider. If staff show any signs of COVID-symptoms, they are required to self-quarantine at home, per CDC guidance for health care workers.
- 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. All veteran residents' health is being monitored and retesting is being conducted for veterans both on- and off-site as clinically appropriate.
  - The Soldiers' Home's medical team is making all clinical decisions following [the latest CDC guidance](#), which continues to evolve as the medical community learns more about this new virus. The CDC recommends making medical decisions regarding when to end isolation and determine that the patient has recovered based on symptoms and time elapsed.
  - Since the start of the pandemic, more than 80 residents had been determined clinically recovered, which means that they at one point tested positive for COVID-19 but are now considered clinically recovered as defined by federal CDC guidance.
- The Baker-Polito Administration is in the midst of the expedited capital project to reimagine the future of the Soldiers' Home in Holyoke, led by architecture firm Payette. The project team is actively gathering input from a broad community of stakeholders as part of the Rapid Planning Phase, in addition to working on the needs assessment, the clinical options, and the facility's infrastructure. This work will inform the development of the implementation plan to meet the April 15, 2021 federal Veterans' Affairs' State Home Construction Grant application deadline.
  - The team launched a website for the project, [www.mass.gov/HolyokeSHProject](http://www.mass.gov/HolyokeSHProject), and an online survey to gather input: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/WCX32P2>
- 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 status as of October 6 is as follows:**
  - The status of all residents:
    - 0 positive and not clinically recovered
    - 58 veterans are negative
    - 1 resident has a pending test
    - 76 residents have been determined clinically recovered
    - 1 resident has refused testing
  - Resident locations:
    - 110 veterans are onsite
    - 26 veterans are offsite
      - 24 veterans are at a dedicated skilled nursing unit at Holyoke Medical Center

## COVID-19 RESPONSE COMMAND CENTER WEEKLY SITUATION REPORT

- 2 veterans are receiving acute care offsite
- Since March 1, there have been 76 veteran deaths of veterans who tested positive
- From the most recent round of staff surveillance testing
  - 0 tested positive
  - All others who previously tested positive are clinically recovered

### **Chelsea Soldiers' Home Weekly Update (current as of 10/6/20)**

- There are currently no COVID-19-positive veteran residents at the Soldiers' Home in Chelsea. A resident who was clinically recovered from COVID-19 experienced COVID-like symptoms, was proactively transferred to a hospital for treatment and tested positive but has since tested negative twice and is not considered positive. The resident is being treated for issues not related to COVID-19 at an acute care facility offsite.
- At this time, there are three non-clinical staff members of the Soldiers' Home in Chelsea that were identified through testing. In the case of each positive staff person, per infection control protocol, the Home immediately puts in place necessary precautions including deep cleaning, contact tracing, and suspending visitation. The Home will continue to perform surveillance testing, and will continue to follow CMS, CDC and DPH guidance in identifying potential close contacts of each positive case.
  - Last week, two non-clinical staff members of the Soldiers' Home in Chelsea tested positive. One was previously recovered. Neither individual provides direct care to residents.
  - On September 17, a non-clinical staff member of the Soldiers' Home in Chelsea tested positive for COVID-19. This staff member does not provide direct care to residents.
  - The Soldiers' Home in Chelsea currently conducts bi-weekly staff surveillance testing. In accordance with [the recent CMS Interim Rule](#), the Soldiers' Home is now conducting weekly testing until the facility is 14 days without positive test results. These tests are provided at no cost to employees.
- Visitation has been temporarily suspended per infection control protocol to protect the health and safety of veteran residents and loved ones, as the [outdoor visitation plan](#) is contingent on the continued stability of infection control and public health metrics. Families and loved ones will be notified when it is safe to resume visitation.
  - Video visits between veteran residents and their loved ones are continuing, and the Social Work team is available for ad hoc updates with support from social work and clinical staff.
  - Families can also request updates on their loved ones by contacting the Home at [CSH@mass.gov](mailto:CSH@mass.gov) and through phone and video conversations. Medical information can only be shared with an authorized health care proxy.
- Clinical staff closely monitor any changes in residents, and the Soldiers' Home's medical team is making all clinical decisions following [the latest CDC guidance](#), which continues to evolve as the medical community learns more about this new virus. The CDC recommends making medical decisions regarding when to end isolation and determine that the patient has recovered based on symptoms and time elapsed.
  - Since the start of the pandemic, more than 40 residents had been determined clinically recovered, which means that they at one point tested positive for COVID-19 but are now considered clinically recovered as defined by federal CDC guidance.
  - Individuals are determined recovered according to CDC guidance, and may test positive even after being clinically recovered. This is a known consequence of the PCR test, which is extremely sensitive to picking up virus or viral remnants even weeks after recovery.

## COVID-19 RESPONSE COMMAND CENTER WEEKLY SITUATION REPORT

- The Soldiers' Home in Chelsea monitors the PPE supply, and continues to receive shipments of PPE. 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 status as of October 6 is as follows:**
  - Residents
    - 0 veteran residents are positive
    - 146 veteran residents are negative
    - 43 residents have recovered, meaning they previously tested positive and are now clinically recovered
    - 0 residents have pending tests
    - Since March 1, there have been 31 deaths of veterans who tested positive
  - Following staff testing:
    - 3 employees are positive
    - All other employees who previously tested positive have been determined clinically recovered

## *Resources*

### **Department of Elementary and Secondary Education**

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) now reports on the number of positive COVID-19 cases as reported to the DESE by school districts (including charter schools), collaboratives, and approved special education schools. The data only represents what has been reported to DESE. For more information and to view the report people can visit: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/positive-cases/>

### **MassSupport**

MassSupport is the Massachusetts Crisis Counseling Program funded by the Federal Emergency Management Agency and managed in partnership between the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health and Riverside Trauma Center, a program of Riverside Community Care. MassSupport provides:

- Free and confidential counseling for stress and other emotional reactions to the Pandemic in multiple languages
- Referral to services
- Free mental health screenings on MassSupport website: [www.MassSupport.org](http://www.MassSupport.org)

MassSupport can help you:

- Take stock of needs
- Identify solutions
- Enhance or develop coping strategies
- Feel heard
- Understand and manage your reactions
- Be less stressed
- Get reliable, fact-based information

Contact MassSupport by phone at **888-215-4920** or by email at [MassSupport@riversidecc.org](mailto:MassSupport@riversidecc.org)

### **Red Cross Virtual Family Assistance Center**

## COVID-19 RESPONSE COMMAND CENTER WEEKLY SITUATION REPORT

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:

- 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 daily 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.

## *Communications Resources*

### **Public Messaging Resources for Higher-Risk Communities**

- [Public messaging graphics & guidelines for use in your community](#)

COVID-19 RESPONSE COMMAND CENTER  
WEEKLY SITUATION REPORT

**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	<a href="#">How to Safely Cover Your Face Outside of Home</a>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">English</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Spanish</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Portuguese</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Simplified Chinese</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Traditional Chinese</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Vietnamese</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Haitian Creole</a></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">English</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Spanish</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Portuguese</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Simplified Chinese</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Traditional Chinese</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Vietnamese</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Haitian Creole</a></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Spanish</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Portuguese</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Simplified Chinese</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Traditional Chinese</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Haitian Creole</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Vietnamese</a></li> </ul>

- [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 and Stay Home,” and “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**

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](http://RedCrossBlood.org/plasma4covid) to learn more. 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](http://www.RedCrossBlood.org)