

Tuesday, April 21, 2020

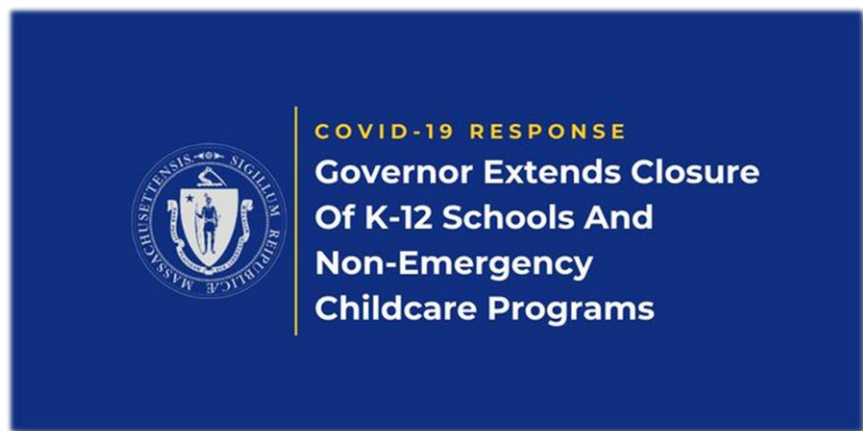
COVID-19 Command Center

Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency

Situation Update

State Actions in Today's Report:

- Daily Case Update (link in sidebar)
- Update on Schools and Non-Emergency Childcare Programs
- Child Care Program Resources
- Remote Learning Resources
- STEM Learning Resources
- No-Interest Student Loan Program Update
- New Eviction and Foreclosure Protections
- Change in Mobile Testing Program
- Update on Holyoke and Chelsea Soldiers' Homes
- DPH COVID-19 Dashboard (updated daily)



Helpful Links:

- [Jobs Available to Assist Long Term Care Facilities](#)
- [Mass.Gov/covid19](#)
- [Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency](#)
- [Unemployment & COVID-19](#)
- [Dept. Of Transitional Assistance Online Portal](#)
- [FrontlineMA.org](#)
- [Emergency Childcare Site](#)
- [MBTA.com/covid19](#)
- [COVID-19 Cost Eligibility and Tracking Guidance](#)
- [Complete List of Emergency Orders & 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 4/21**

41,199 Total Cases ([click here for more information](#))

1,961 Deaths

175,372 patients tested to date by MA State Public Health Laboratory, hospitals and commercial laboratories.

United States **current as of 4/21**

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:

776,093 Total Cases

41,758 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

Earlier today, Governor Charlie Baker and Lt. Governor Karyn Polito, joined HHS Secretary Marylou Sudders, DESE Commissioner Jeffery Riley, and EEC Commissioner Samantha Aigner-Treworgy to provide the following updates on the Commonwealth's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. ([See video of today's briefing](#))

Schools and Non-Emergency Child Care Programs ([Read the News Release](#))

Governor Baker issued an emergency order extending the closure of all public and private schools through the end of the school year, and the closure of all non-emergency child care programs until June 29, 2020 in an effort to prevent the further spread of COVID-19 in the Commonwealth.

- This order expands the [March 25](#) order suspending normal educational operations at schools and non-emergency child care programs. The Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) established a process to approve [Exempt Emergency Child Care Programs](#) to serve families of first responders, medical personnel and essential workers.
- Emergency Child Care programs approved by EEC will continue operating. Currently there are 523 emergency child care programs statewide serving families of essential workers. Weekly attendance averages about 2,500 children in these programs across the Commonwealth.
- EEC will continue to pay subsidies to child care providers based on their pre-COVID-19 enrollment, in order to support the workforce.
- The order does not apply to residential special education schools.

Read the Orders here: [K-12 School Order Link](#) | [Child Care Program Link](#)

Child Care Program Resources

The Department of Early Education and Care is reviewing its regulations and funding programs to develop new approaches to incrementally restore child care capacity for family child care and center-based programs in the coming months.

- To support families of essential workers and families with children who have special needs, EEC and Care.com have partnered to assist currently unemployed child care workers and provide skilled in-home care. Care.com is offering both eligible families and child care workers free 90-day premium memberships, accessible [here](#).
- Complementing the existing partnership between WGBH and DESE, EEC is launching further collaboration with WGBH to provide resources and activities for parents with young children.

Remote Learning Resources

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) will issue updated guidelines for schools to support remote learning efforts through the duration of the school year, including expanded STEM learning, and will prepare recommendations to strengthen summer learning opportunities for students.

- DESE has launched a Remote Learning Essentials initiative, focused on addressing access to tools, Internet connectivity, and educator training necessary to enhance remote learning during school closures.
- The department is conducting a survey of school districts to identify barriers that inhibit effective remote learning, including challenges around inequitable access to technology.
- An advisory group of administrators, educators, parents, students and business leaders will engage external partners to mobilize resources for schools, including philanthropic gifts and in-kind contributions.

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- DESE will also solicit input from national and local education vendors regarding the potential to create a statewide online education platform for districts to opt into and customize.

STEM Learning Resources

In partnership with EEC, DHE, the STEM Advisory Council and Regional STEM Networks, DESE has established online STEM education resources to provide continued support for remote learning opportunities. This includes virtual STEM learning opportunities for both students and teachers, and is accessible [here](#).

No-Interest Student Loan Program

The Massachusetts Department of Higher Education (DHE) is deferring scheduled repayments for its No-Interest Loan Program for a duration of four months to support relief efforts during the COVID-19 public health emergency. These deferments will help approximately 12,000 students that participate in the \$5 million program annually funded through the repayment of loans.

- All no-interest loan accounts currently in repayment will automatically be placed in a deferment from April 2020 through July 2020. This deferment will not count toward the program's permissible 36 months of available deferment.
- If a payment has already been made for April, that payment will be applied to the outstanding balance and not refunded. While accounts are in deferment, borrowers who wish to continue monthly payments may do so, without incurring late fees until July 31, 2020.
- Accounts currently 120 days past due will not be placed into collections until August 2020, and regular credit bureau reporting will resume at the end of August.

Eviction and Foreclosure Protections

Yesterday, Governor Baker signed legislation into law to protect homeowners and tenants from eviction and foreclosure. *An Act providing for a moratorium on evictions and foreclosures during the COVID-19 emergency* ensures housing stability for residents and families, and can be read in its entirety [here](#).

Update on COVID-19 Testing

As of today, **175,372** tests have been conducted; **5,974** new tests conducted. Daily test reporting data, including number of positive cases, can be found at [here](#) at 4:00 PM each day.

Mobile Testing Program Update Re: Self-Test Kits for Nursing Homes, Rest Homes and Assisted Living

On April 8, the Massachusetts COVID-19 Command Center issued updated guidance to Nursing Homes, Rest Homes and Assisted Living Residences offering those facilities with on-site medical staff the option to collect samples themselves using test kits from the Broad Institute (instead of on-site testing by Massachusetts National Guard).

This option was provided upon request from facilities and with the intent of maximizing testing capacity as quickly as possible. More than 14,000 kits were requested and sent to 150 facilities; however, only approximately 4,000 samples have been returned from approximately 50 facilities. Many facilities sent back a fraction of the kits they received and many samples were in a condition compromising result quality and safety (unlabeled samples or leaking tubes). The Command Center's priority is to maximize testing in nursing homes, rest homes, and assisted living residences but needs to do so responsibly and in a way that ensures high-quality test results that facilities can act upon, while also ensuring that limited resources are used well.

For these reasons, the "self-swab" option has been discontinued. Effective immediately, facilities contacting the call center and requesting testing will be offered on-site professional testing by MA National Guard or an EMS

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provider. The COVID Command Center testing call center will reach out to facilities that have received test kits but not returned samples and offer to schedule on-site testing.

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

Onsite Testing			Mobile Testing at EOHHS Group Homes & Care Sites (as of 4/19)	
Date	Number of Tests Completed	Facilities Visited	DDS, DMH, DCF and DPH Facilities	
4/20	539	6	Clients	2786
			Staff	2538
			Total Tests	5,324
			Number of Locations	301
Total (as of 4/20)	9,370	317		

Other Important Updates

Holyoke Soldiers' Home

- The Clinical Command continues to respond to the COVID-19 outbreak while bringing on additional management staff for nursing, facilities, operations and administration to complement the existing staff. This week, consulting support from Baystate Medical Practice Management is being used to assist in administrative procedures.
 - Clinical command continues to focus on enforcing quarantine zones for COVID-19 positive residents, enforcing use of PPE and monitoring supply, and ensuring increased disinfection protocols.
 - Additional social work staff is being brought onboard to support staff during this challenging time on weekends and per diem throughout the week.
- Governor Charlie Baker has advised flags be lowered to half-staff until the end of the public health emergency at the Soldiers' Home in Chelsea, Soldiers' Home in Holyoke, as well as the Massachusetts Veterans Memorial Cemetery in Agawam and Winchendon due to the fact Military Honors are unavailable during this public health crisis.
- The Holyoke Soldiers' Home continues regular communication with veteran residents' health care proxies, and is scheduling regular updates for families, which is made possible through the additional clinical case management nursing staff that was brought on board.
 - On Monday, the Military Friends Foundation delivered a donation of 20 iPads for veterans to use to communicate with their families and for personal entertainment during quarantine.
 - Families can call the Family Hotline at 413-552-4764 Monday – Friday 8:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m., and Saturday 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 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. If a family member requests an update and is **not** the health care proxy, the name of the health care proxy will be shared and it will be suggested that

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the health care proxy should call and request the update.

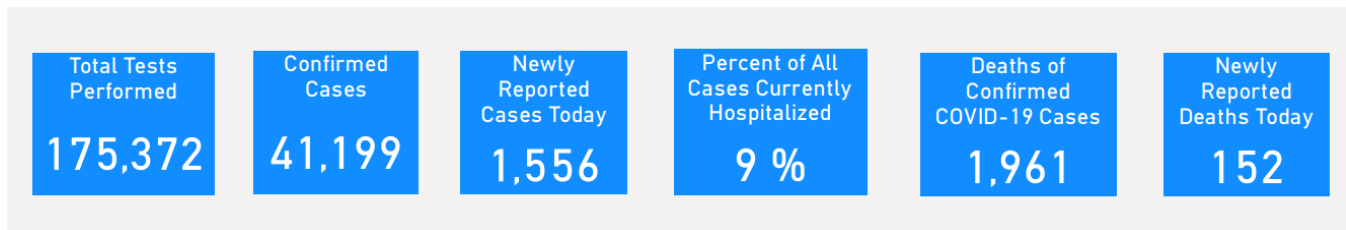
- **The total numbers at the Holyoke Soldiers' Home as of Tuesday:**
 - 63 veteran resident deaths (52 positive, 9 negatives, 1 pending, 1 unknown)
 - Today's update includes 1 death who tested negative and was receiving hospice care
 - 94 veteran residents have tested positive
 - 60 veteran residents have tested negative
 - 9 veteran residents have pending tests
 - 81 employees have tested positive

Chelsea Soldiers' Home

- The Chelsea Soldiers' Home clinical command continues to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, including regular coordinating calls with the VA Health Care System, continuously reviewing and implementing infection control policy, and daily monitoring of personal protective equipment (PPE) supply and procuring additional PPE from regular supply chain and from emergency DPH sources, today Chelsea will be receiving an additional 20,000 masks.
- The Chelsea Soldiers' Home is collaborating with the VA Health Care System to proactively transfer veterans who may need care, and to accept Veterans back who have been medically cleared to return from VA facilities.
- Staffing levels are being closely monitored by the Chelsea clinical command, and identified gaps driven by positive employees in self-quarantine per CDC guidelines are being filled by contractors from staffing agencies as needed. So far 47 slots have been filled through staffing agency contracted roles.
- Governor Charlie Baker has advised flags be lowered to half-staff until the end of the public health emergency at the Soldiers' Home in Chelsea, Soldiers' Home in Holyoke, as well as the Massachusetts Veterans Memorial Cemetery in Agawam and Winchendon due to the fact Military Honors are unavailable during this public health crisis.
- Veteran residents are communicating with their families and loved ones via video with support from the Chelsea Soldiers' Home Social Work team.
 - On Monday, the Military Friends Foundation delivered a donation of 5 iPads for veterans to use to communicate with their families and for personal entertainment during quarantine.
 - Families can request updates on their loved ones by contacting the Home at CSH@mass.gov and through phone and video conversations. Please note the Soldiers' Home can only share medical information about a resident with the authorized health care proxy on file.
- **The total numbers at the Chelsea Soldiers' Home as of Tuesday:**
 - 16 veteran resident deaths (12 tested positive, 4 tested negative)
 - 25 veteran residents who have tested positive
 - 206 veteran residents who have tested negative
 - 52 staff tested positive

Department of Public Health COVID-19 Dashboard

An enhanced, comprehensive and detailed COVID-19 data report, which includes trend data in a variety of areas (e.g. information on cases rates, testing, geography of confirmed cases etc.), death related data and specific data on COVID-19 hospital census information, nursing homes, skilled nursing facilities, rest homes (with known clusters), and PPE distribution is updated daily by 4PM ([click here to access the report](#)). Key data reflected in today's report is provided below:



Resources

Disaster Recovery Information

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 [website](#) with information and guidance regarding the disaster declaration, eligibility criteria, and the application process.

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:

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- 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.

Please share our Communications Resources

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:

[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.](#)
- Volunteer for the new Community Tracing Collaborative by visiting the [PIH Ma-Response](#) page [or DIRECT link](#) to recruiter web.
- Donate or sell personal protective equipment: [Please click here.](#)
- Health care facilities can learn more about [requesting personal protective equipment here.](#)
- Apply for Jobs at COVID-19 Temporary Care Sites [\(Details Here\).](#)

Give Blood:

As you are aware, the COVID-19 virus has caused the cancellation of blood drives across the Commonwealth. There is an urgent need **now**. The Governor has deemed “Blood and plasma donors and the employees of the organizations that operate and manage related activities” as an essential service. Your support is needed to communicate to your residents that the need is urgent, and donating is a necessity to supply the hospitals with the blood our neighbors require. Donating blood is safe and people should not hesitate to give. In addition,

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there is a need for community blood drive sites in the eastern part of the state. Identifying donation sites is vital to meet the demand as we go forward. Your local knowledge, suggestions of sites, and potential partners are crucial to meeting the needs of our neighbors who need blood and blood products. To schedule a new blood drive contact Bill Forsyth at (617) 699-3808 or at email William.Forsyth@redcross.org.

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 or calling 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767).

Requests for Red Cross Emergency Response

American Red Cross

The American Red Cross (ARC) of Massachusetts is committed to fulfilling our Mission of providing emergency relief to our neighbors following a home fire or other disaster. In order to maintain our commitment to assisting to those affected while balancing our volunteer workforce safety, we have implemented the below temporary changes to our response protocols. ARC we will be responding to your requests for service with a virtual response and ask your assistance in sharing this information with your Incident Commanders and Dispatch Center personnel.

Notification: Continue to request a response by contacting our long-standing emergency line **800-564-1234**.

When calling: Please have contact information for the head of household for each displaced family unit.

A point of contact from the Fire Department or Emergency Management on-scene that we can coordinate with if needed. Quick assessment as to extent of damage.

What we will do:

- Contact each head of household by phone or video chat. Open a virtual case for each affected family.
- Arrange for lodging if needed.
- Deliver a Client Assistance Card (financial assistance) to hotel, family member's home, etc.
- Provide Recovery guidance and assistance in the days following the incident.

If a virtual response is not possible, we will send a minimal number of Red Cross volunteers to the scene to orchestrate the virtual intake process. We value our partnership with your department and encourage you to contact us with any questions.