

Wednesday, April 8, 2020

COVID-19 Command Center

Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency

Situation Update

State Actions in Today's Report:

- Daily Case Update: New Data on Race & Ethnicity (Link in sidebar)
- COVID-19 Testing Sites Expansion
- Crisis Standards of Care
- Grocery Store Guidance
- Civil Liability Protections for Health Care Workers
- Other Updates From the Command Center
- Update on Cases in Long Term Care Facilities & Testing Program
- Update on Holyoke and Chelsea Soldiers' Homes

Gov. Baker, LG Polito & Secretary Sudders Give Daily Update (Details Below)



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

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 4/8*

16,790 Total Cases (click for more information)

433 Deaths

87,511 patients tested to date by MA State Public Health Laboratory, hospitals and commercial laboratories.

United States *current as of 4/8*

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:

395,011 Total Cases

12,754 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 3:30 p.m. press conference, Governor Baker, Lt. Governor Polito, and Secretary Sudders provided the following updates and announcements: ([see video of today's briefing](#))

COVID-19 Testing Sites Expansion: (News Release)

The Baker-Polito Administration today announced that COVID-19 testing for Massachusetts public safety personnel will be available at a second location beginning tomorrow, doubling the number of free, drive-through tests available for first responders and other emergency management workers.

A mobile testing site at the Big E fairgrounds in West Springfield will begin operations tomorrow, and will supplement [a site at Gillette Stadium in Foxborough that launched earlier this week](#). Each site will serve police officers, firefighters, EMS and PSAP personnel, correction officers, mortuary service providers, and state active duty National Guard personnel who perform critical public safety functions.

The mobile testing sites in Foxborough and West Springfield will each perform up to 200 tests per day, seven days per week from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., with appointments scheduled in advance by agencies and departments through a call center at the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security. Testing will be performed at no charge. Test results for symptomatic personnel will be expedited and provided in 24 to 48 hours. Test results for asymptomatic personnel will be provided within three to five days. All test results will be provided electronically.

The sites reflect a partnership among the Baker-Polito Administration, the Big E, Brewster Ambulance Service, the Department of Correction, the Department of Fire Services, the New England Patriots, the New England Revolution, Wellpath, and Quest Diagnostics.

In addition to the two sites above, the rapid testing site in Lowell, located in the parking lot of Showcase Cinema at 32 Reiss St., continues in operation. This site is able to test up to 1,000 patients per day and uses the new Abbott ID NOW™ COVID-19 test, which allows for patients to receive results on-site (within 15 minutes) so they can properly quarantine or seek treatment as appropriate. Patients need to pre-register in advance through [CVS.com](#) in order to schedule a same-day time slot for testing at this site.

Crisis Standards of Care:

The Administration today released Crisis Standards of Care guidelines for the Commonwealth's health care facilities. Upon the request of leaders in the health care system, the Department of Public Health (DPH) convened a Crisis Standards of Care Advisory Committee that included medical experts and ethicists from across the Commonwealth, representing both large academic medical centers and community hospitals. Their recommendations helped inform ethical, equitable and transparent guidelines for providing acute care during a crisis.

The guidelines, which are not mandatory, are designed to:

- Help health care institutions and providers make consistent decisions about the use and allocation of scarce medical resources;
- Ensure that critical resources are conserved and distributed efficiently, equitably, and ethically across the health care system;
- Promote transparent decision-making and public trust in the fairness and equity of the system;
- Protect those who might otherwise face barriers to accessing care; and

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- Assure patients and their families that they will receive fair access to care under the circumstances regardless of where they live in the Commonwealth. [Click here to read the Crisis Standards of Care document.](#)

Grocery Store Guidance:

Yesterday, the Department of Public Health released further guidance to promote social distancing at grocery stores. The new guidance requires that each grocery store limit occupancy to 40% of its maximum permitted occupancy level (except stores with a maximum occupancy of less than 25 people). It also sets out procedures by which staff should monitor occupancy levels. The guidance builds on a [previous March 23 order for grocery stores](#), which set out policies for ensuring access to handwashing facilities and protecting employees in higher-risk populations, among other requirements.

[Click here to read the new guidance.](#)

Civil Liability Protections for Health Care Workers During COVID-19 Response: ([News Release](#))

Governor Baker today filed legislation to provide health care workers and facilities protections from civil liability while they are on the front lines of the Commonwealth's COVID-19 response.

The legislation would protect health care professionals, including doctors, nurses, and emergency medical technicians, as well as certain health care facilities, from liability and suit when the care that they provide is impacted by the COVID-19 emergency. The bill would also provide protections for the health care workers staffing the unique Field Medical Stations being stood up at the DCU Center, Boston Convention & Exhibition Center and other locations.

Also today, Governor Baker issued a directive that will maximize protections for health care workers under the federal Public Readiness and Emergency Preparedness Act ("PREP Act") during the state of emergency. The directive will ensure that health care workers and facilities that distribute and administer testing, drugs, and medical devices for the diagnosis and treatment of COVID-19 are protected from suit and liability to the maximum extent possible under the PREP Act.

Click below to read today's legislation and directive:

- [Liability Protection Legislation Filing Letter](#)
- [Liability Protection Legislation](#)
- [Governor's PREP Act Directive](#)

Additional Updates from the Command Center:

Secretary Sudders provided the following updates from the COVID Command Center:

- Yesterday, the Administration launched a new Nursing Home Family Resource Line, a dedicated telephone line that will connect family members of nursing home and rest home residents with the information and resources they need. Families and community members can call the line at **(617) 660-5399**. To date, the Resource Line has received over 150 calls.
- **Race & Ethnicity Case Reporting:** COVID-19 testing is carried out by private labs, hospitals, and other partners. DPH has been working with these partners to improve the reporting data on race/ethnicity in order to better understand where and upon whom the burden of COVID-19 is falling so as to better target the Commonwealth's response. Starting today, [DPH's daily report](#) on COVID-19 cases will include data on race/ethnicity, with the following caveats:

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- Information on race and ethnicity is collected and reported by multiple entities and may or may not reflect self-report by the individual case.
- If no information is provided by any reporter on a case's race or ethnicity, DPH classifies it as "missing".
- A classification of "unknown" indicates the reporter did not know the race and ethnicity of the individual, the individual refused to provide information, or that the originating reporting system does not capture the information.
- "Other" indicates multiple races or that the originating reporting system does not capture the information.

Race/Ethnicity	Confirmed Cases N (%)	Deaths N (%)
Hispanic	1162 (7%)	14 (3%)
Non-Hispanic White	2751 (16%)	98 (23%)
Non-Hispanic Black/African American	889 (5%)	7 (2%)
Non-Hispanic Asian	235 (1%)	6 (1%)
Non-Hispanic Other ⁴	506 (3%)	8 (2%)
Unknown	8971 (53%)	231 (53%)
Missing	2276 (14%)	69 (16%)
Total	16790	433

Other Important Updates

Known Cases in Long Term Care Facilities (as of 4/8 at 12:30 p.m.)

COVID-19 Cases in Long-Term Care (LTC) Facilities	
Residents/Healthcare Workers of LTC Facilities	1,236
LTC Facilities Reporting at Least One Case of COVID-19	140

[Click here for the source](#)

Update on Mobile Testing Program for Long Term Care Facilities

Last week, the Commonwealth implemented a project that allows for safe, on-site testing of symptomatic residents of nursing and rest homes with a quick turnaround. The program is operating under the auspices of the Massachusetts National Guard in partnership with the Department of Public Health and Broad Institute of Cambridge. Since launching the initiative, more than **2,000** tests have been collected. **Beginning tomorrow, the initiative will evolve to include assisted living residences.** See a summary below of tests completed so far.

Date	Tests Completed	Facilities Visited
3/31	225	1
4/1	55	1
4/2	145	10
4/3	193	18
4/4	310	21
4/5	309	18

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4/6	124	11
4/7	308	23
4/8	362	19
Total	2031	122

Update on Holyoke & Chelsea Soldiers' Home (as of 4/8)

The Commonwealth continues to make every resource available to the clinical command centers at the Holyoke and Chelsea Soldiers' Homes as they work to care for the veteran residents and staff, including deploying additional staff, supplies, and support for veteran residents, families, and employees as they navigate the challenges of this public health emergency. Below are updates for 4/8:

Holyoke Soldiers' Home

- On Tuesday evening, the Holyoke Soldiers' Home confirmed that 100% of veteran residents' health care proxies have been reached and provided with a clinical update on their loved one.
 - Ongoing family communication is continuing - including proactive status update calls to health care proxies - with support from nurse case managers and social workers brought onsite on Monday.
 - The clinical team will be reaching out to families proactively to establish regular communications.
 - 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 the health care proxy should call and request the update.
- All veterans who have tested negative are being continuously evaluated by clinicians and tests are being reordered based on medical status. The team has ordered retesting for 18 veterans as of today, and will continue to order additional tests.
- The Holyoke Soldiers' Home continues to focus on staffing levels to ensure safe, ongoing care of veteran residents.
 - Staff testing is being wrapped up today for on-site employees.
 - If staff have not been tested because they are on medical leave or are offsite for other reasons, they have been contacted and offered tests.
- The Holyoke Soldiers' Home clinical command structure continues to prepare and respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - Ensuring staffing levels to continue care for residents, including leveraging clinical support from the National Guard. An enhanced staffing pattern is being developed, and additional support from contracted and per-diem staff is being added.
 - Medical and nursing rounds continues to ensure infection protocols are being followed.
 - Holyoke continues to implement the guidance issued from CDC, DPH, CMS, and the VA.
 - The clinical command is enforcing quarantine zones for COVID-19 positive residents, and continues to distribute and require use of PPE, restricting visitors, increased personal hygiene measures, and increased disinfection protocols.

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- Additional contracted housekeeping staff have been brought onsite for ongoing terminal cleaning to ensure that infection control measures are adhered to.
- **The total numbers at the Holyoke Soldiers' Home as of Wednesday:**
 - 27 veteran resident deaths (20 positive tests, 3 pending, 3 negatives, 1 unknown)
 - 62 veteran residents have tested positive
 - 134 veteran residents have tested negative (46 who have been transferred, 91 onsite)
 - 68 staff tested positive; 210 staff tested negative

Chelsea Soldiers' Home

- The Chelsea Soldiers' Home personal protective equipment supply is monitored daily, and this week there will be a delivery of face shields to continue to protect staff as they provide care and clean environments for veteran residents.
- Staff testing is in progress and will be completed early this week.
 - Staff that are currently on medical leave are also being screened via drive through testing in the parking lot.
- As additional tests come back positive, veteran residents' health care status is being evaluated and many are being proactively moved to the VA Health Care System for additional monitoring and treatment.
- Chelsea continues to leverage its clinical case management staff and social workers for resident communications with loved ones:
 - iPads have been delivered to Chelsea to support veteran resident communications, with assistance of social workers.
 - Families can also request updates on their loved ones by contacting the Home at CSH@mass.gov.
 - Please note the Soldiers' Home can only share medical information about a resident with the authorized health care proxy on file.
- The Chelsea Soldiers' Home clinical command has standing meetings to proactively prepare and respond to the COVID-19 pandemic:
 - The Chelsea Soldiers' Home has and continues to implement the guidance issued from CDC, DPH, CMS, and the VA.
 - Strictly enforcing isolation rooms and quarantine zones for COVID-19 positive residents, increased use of PPE, restricting visitors, increased personal hygiene measures, and increased disinfection protocols.
 - The team continues to manage staffing to provide safe care for residents - and is putting in place per diem contracts with NP, RN, LPNs for immediate starts.
 - Deep cleaning has been and is continuing to be conducted throughout the facility per CDC guidelines and Chelsea has contracted with a cleaning vendor to augment staff housekeeping efforts.
 - All veteran residents who test positive for COVID-19 have been transferred to the Boston VA Health Care System, and if additional veteran residents test positive, they will be to receive appropriate clinical care.
- **The total numbers at Chelsea Soldiers' Home as of Wednesday:**
 - 7 veteran resident deaths (5 tested positive, 2 test pending)
 - 21 veteran residents who have tested positive
 - 114 veteran residents who have tested negative

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- 108 veteran residents have been tested and are awaiting results
- 10 staff tested positive

DCF Guidance on Reporting Abuse and Neglect for First Responders

The Department of Children and Families (DCF) has developed the following guidance for first responders who are faced with local child protection matters related to COVID-19:

DCF works in partnership with families and communities to keep children safe from abuse and neglect. Child protection is an essential function of state government and during the COVID-19 outbreak, the Department remains fully operational with social workers responding to emergencies 24 hours per day. DCF offices are open, however most DCF employees are teleworking and offices are closed to walk-in visitors.

Reporting Abuse or Neglect

DCF is designated by state law to receive and assess all reports of suspected abuse and/or neglect of children under the age of 18. Law enforcement, medical professionals and educators are all considered [mandated reporters](#) by state law. If you suspect child abuse or neglect, you must report it immediately to DCF. All reports of suspected child abuse or neglect **must be phoned in**.

During regular business hours (8:45 a.m.-5 p.m. M-F) call the [Department of Families and Children \(DCF\) area office that serves the city or town](#) where the child lives.

Nights, weekends, and holidays dial the Child-at-Risk Hotline at [\(800\) 792-5200](#).

If a child is in immediate danger, call 911.

What types of situations does DCF respond to?

DCF screens and responds to reports where a child may have been or is at risk of being abused and/or neglected by a caregiver, or where a child may have been or may be at risk of sexual exploitation and/or human trafficking. You can find more information on DCF's definitions of abuse/neglect [here](#).

Supporting Caregivers who are Ill with COVID-19

During the COVID-19 response, first responders may encounter situations where a child's parents or caregiver require immediate medical care or hospitalization, leaving care for children into question. The following questions can be helpful in deciding if a report needs to be made to DCF:

- Have the caregivers identified an alternative caregiver to care for their children while they receive medical care?
- Have they expressed concern about the alternative caregiver's capacity to care for children?
- Have you observed any concerns about the alternative caregiver's capacity to care for children?
- Are there other potential caregivers available?

DCF can assist in locating appropriate caregivers in some circumstances, for example, in situations where a parent's absence would leave the child without immediate supervision. If you have questions about whether a situation necessitates filing a report with DCF, we recommend calling DCF at the numbers listed above to discuss the situation further.

Other Helpful Resources to Connect Caregivers To:

[2-1-1](#) : Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

Caregiver Affidavit link:

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<https://www.mass.gov/files/documents/2016/08/ul/caregiverauthorizationaffidavitform.pdf>

[Kinship Navigator Program](#): Provides help, assistance, tips, support, guidance and advice for all familial caregivers throughout the Commonwealth. 1-844-924-4KIN (4546)

[Family Resource Centers](#): FRCs are located throughout Massachusetts and offer a variety of services to help families. Some of the FRCs are not physically open, but are providing assistance to families by phone.

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.](#)

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, 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](https://www.redcross.org/blood) or calling 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767).

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.

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:

[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)

10 Tips for at home quarantine or self-monitoring -- coming soon.

Spanish Radio Spots (available on request):

- Prevent the Spread of Germs
- Social Distancing
- Stay Home. Stay Safe. Save Lives.

Social media – please continue to follow and re-tweet DPH on Twitter @MassDPH, updated several times per day.

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:

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- 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.