

# Thursday, December 3, 2020

## COVID-19 Command Center

### Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency

## Situation Update

The Command Center Situation Report is published weekly on Thursdays.



Governor Baker inspects portable workstations during his tour of a field hospital opening at the DCU Center in Worcester. The Administration also announced plans to establish a 2<sup>nd</sup> field hospital in the city of Lowell. Story below.

### In This Week's Report:

- Latest Data: Public Health Update
- Week in Review: Key State Actions
  - Command Center Provides Update on Field Hospitals
  - COVID-19 Alert Sent to Residents
  - Update on Clusters in Houses of Worship
  - Update on Isolation & Recovery Hotels
  - DPH, Emergency Management, and Disaster Recovery Updates
  - Holyoke and Chelsea Soldiers' Homes Weekly Update

### Helpful Links:

- **New:** Apply for jobs at COVID-19 Alternate Care Sites
  - [UMassMemorialResponds.com](https://umassmemorialresponds.com)
  - [LowellGeneralResponds.com](https://lowellgeneralresponds.com)
- [Get Back Mass](https://getbackmass.com)
- [Mass.gov/holidays](https://mass.gov/holidays)
- [Mass.gov/findfoodhelp](https://mass.gov/findfoodhelp)
- [Stop the Spread](https://stopthespread.com)
- [HandHoldMA.org](https://handholdma.org)
- [Reopening Massachusetts](https://reopeningmassachusetts.com)
- [Mass.Gov/covid19](https://mass.gov/covid19)
- [Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency](https://mass.gov/emergency-management)
- [Unemployment & COVID-19](https://unemploymentandcovid19.com)
- [Dept. Of Transitional Assistance Online Portal](https://dept.mass.gov/transition)
- [COVID-19 Cost Eligibility and Tracking Guidance](https://mass.gov/covid19/cost-eligibility)



## Situation in Numbers

Massachusetts **current as of 12/3**

232,264 Total Confirmed Cases ([click here for more information](#))

10,637 Deaths among confirmed cases

8,677,996 tests for the virus conducted to date by MA State Public Health Laboratory, hospitals, and commercial laboratories.

## United States **Last Updated 12/3**

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:

13,822,249 Total Cases

272,525 Deaths

57 Jurisdictions Reporting Cases (50 states, D.C., Puerto Rico, Guam, Northern Marianas, Marshall Islands, American Samoa, and US V.I.)

### Social Distancing Basics:

- ✓ Stay Home
- ✓ Call/Facetime/online chat with friends and loved ones.

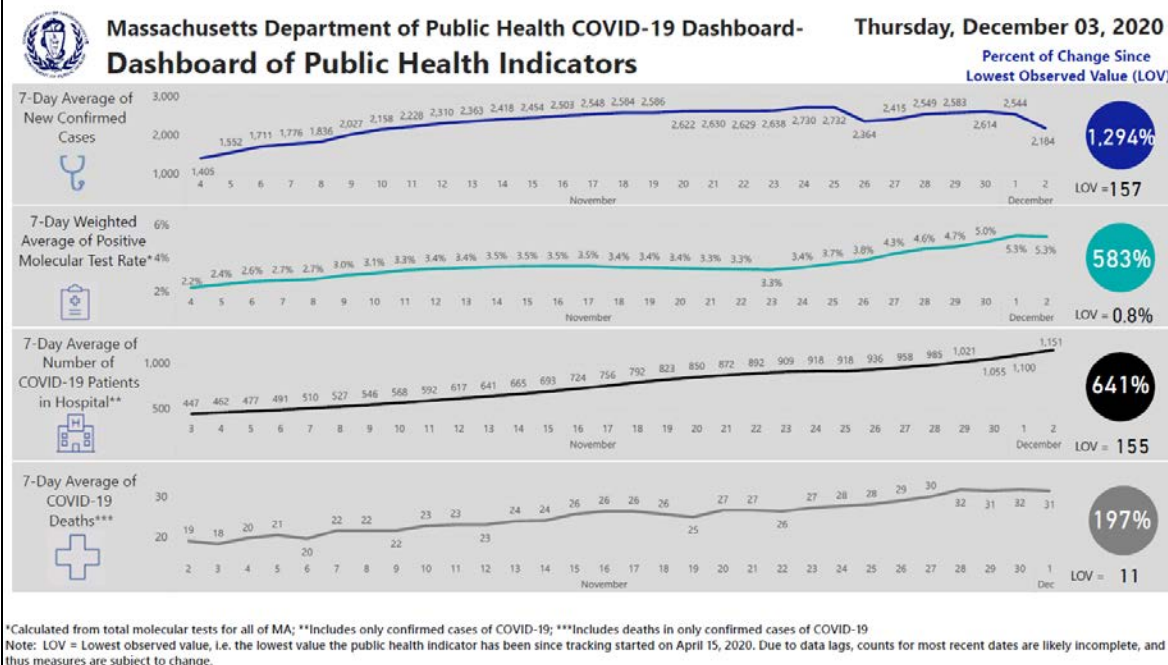
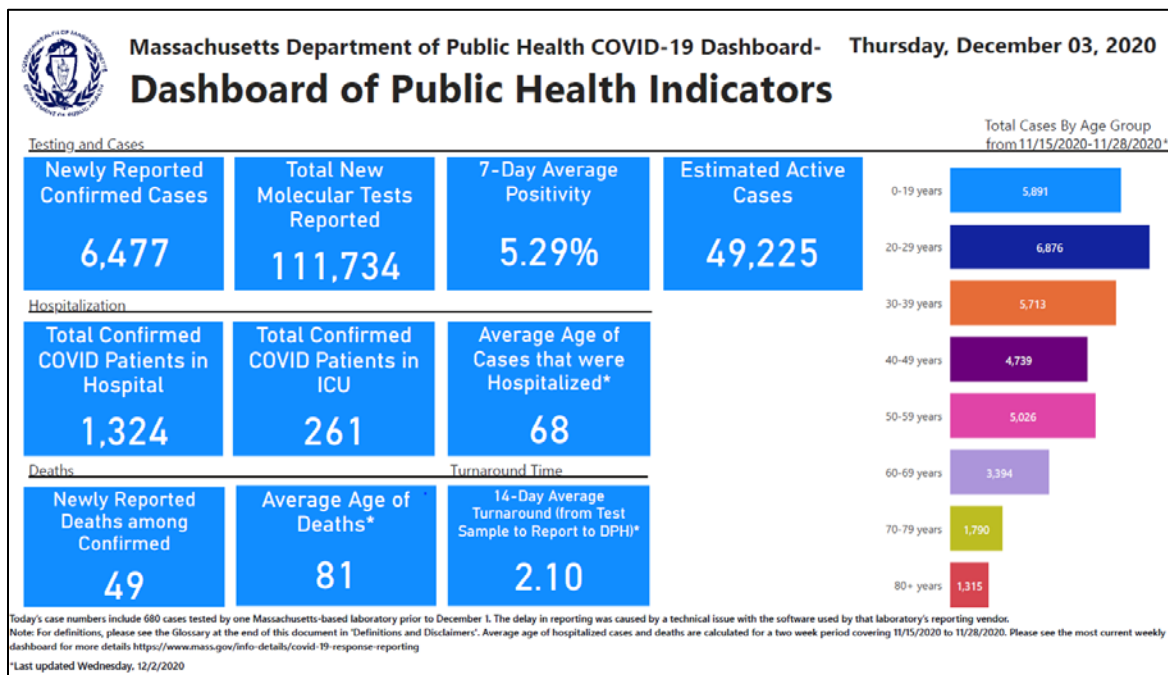
If you go out for essential needs:

- ✓ 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

**Note Regarding today's Dashboard:** Today's case numbers include 680 cases tested by one Massachusetts-based laboratory prior to December 1. The delay in reporting was caused by a technical issue with the software used by that laboratory's reporting vendor.

**Testing Update:** Today, over **111,000** new molecular (viral) tests were reported in Massachusetts with **6,477** newly reported confirmed positive cases. The total number of molecular tests administered to date is over **8.6 million**. **Hospitalizations & Capacity Update:** As of today, **1,324** people are hospitalized, with **261** 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

## **Weekly Public Health Report:**

Today the Command Center released the [Weekly Public Health Report, with town by town information, including the weekly listing of city and town risk levels](#). The report posted today also includes granular information on cases by county, biweekly testing rates, contact tracing information (including active COVID cluster information by Exposure Setting Type), hospitalization data, race and ethnicity data, information about cases in long term care facilities, and PPE distribution data.

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

### **Command Center Provides Update on Establishment of Field Hospitals:**

Governor Charlie Baker and Lt. Governor Karyn Polito today joined Secretary of Health and Human Services Marylou Sudders, MEMA Director Sam Phillips, Maj. General Gary Keefe, Adjutant General of the Massachusetts National Guard, UMass Memorial Health Care CEO Dr. Eric Dickson, and officials from the City of Worcester to tour the reactivated Field Hospital at the DCU Center in Worcester.



Today's tour was the final step in turning over the facility to UMass Memorial Health Care, which will manage and staff all clinical operations at the site. The hospital expects to care for its first patients this Sunday, December 6.

The Administration also announced today that a second field hospital would be constructed in Lowell. This site will be located at UMass Lowell's Campus Recreation Center, with clinical operations managed by Lowell General Hospital. Details on the timeline for opening that facility will be provided soon.

Three weeks ago, the Baker-Polito Administration and the Commonwealth's COVID-19 Command Center announced plans to reestablish the field hospital in Worcester, which is the first field hospital facility to reopen in the state since last June. About 200 people mobilized to construct the site on schedule to meet the increased demand placed on the health care system by a rising number of cases in the state. The newly constructed facility, which can accommodate up to approximately 220 patients, will offer an array of health and medical services for lower acuity COVID-19 positive patients, with improved capabilities to meet urgent clinical needs should they arise. UMass Memorial Health Care, which also operated the site during the springtime surge, used lessons learned from that activation to design congregate spaces that improve patient experience, which can be isolating and often lonely for individuals receiving care.

### **A call for staffing help**

The most critical component of operating field hospitals is the staff that cares for patients. There is an urgent need for trained professionals at both the Worcester and Lowell locations. Both UMass Memorial Health Care and Lowell General Hospital have established staffing application portals for doctors, RN and nurse practitioners, physician assistants, respiratory therapists, social workers, and other positions. Individuals with clinical training and experience are encouraged to apply by visiting the following sites:



**Help Fight COVID-19**

Now hiring staff for field hospitals

DCU Center field hospital: [UMassMemorialResponds.com](http://UMassMemorialResponds.com)

Lowell General field hospital: [LowellGeneralResponds.com](http://LowellGeneralResponds.com)

- Worcester: [www.UmassMemorialResponds.com](http://www.UmassMemorialResponds.com)
- Lowell: [www.LowellGeneralResponds.com](http://www.LowellGeneralResponds.com)

## COVID-19 RESPONSE COMMAND CENTER WEEKLY SITUATION REPORT

### **Command Center Sends COVID-19 Alert to Residents:**

This evening, the COVID-19 Command Center is sent out a message via the Everbridge Resident Connection Alerts MA System reminding residents of the serious risk that COVID-19 poses to the Commonwealth. This is the third message to be sent to residents using the Everbridge alert system. These alerts will appear as a phone call or text message. This alert will reach approximately 4.5 million phone lines, including cell and landlines.



The message was sent beginning at 5 p.m. from Department of Public Health in English and Spanish. Residents can choose to receive future messages by text, email, or phone in their preferred language by opting in at [mass.gov/covidalerts](https://mass.gov/covidalerts).

Today's message will remind residents of the serious risk of COVID-19 spread as we dive deeper into the Holiday Season. This message builds on the Command Center and the COVID-19 Enforcement Intervention Team's (CEIT) efforts to ensure residents remain vigilant with COVID protections, including wearing a mask, washing hands, keeping your distance, and avoiding groups.

### **Phone message text:**

"This is an important message from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. Confirmed cases of COVID-19 are on the rise in Massachusetts, and there is community-wide spread in your city or town. Follow these guidelines to protect yourself and your loved ones. Wear a mask, wash your hands, keep your distance, and avoid groups. For more information on how to stop the spread visit [mass.gov/stopcovid19](https://mass.gov/stopcovid19)"

### **Text message text:**

"MAGov Alert: COVID19 is spreading in your city/town. Protect your loved ones. Wear a mask. Wash hands. Keep your distance. Avoid groups. [Mass.gov/stopcovid19](https://mass.gov/stopcovid19)"

### **Update on COVID-19 Clusters in Houses of Worship**

On Tuesday, Governor Charlie Baker, Lt. Governor Karyn Polito and Secretary of Health and Human Services Marylou Sudders outlined findings from contact tracing efforts related to clusters tied to houses of worship. According to data reviewed by the Command Center, since the beginning of the pandemic houses of worship have been associated with:

- 36 clusters
- 316 confirmed cases in 48 communities across the Commonwealth, and
- 150 close contacts



The Administration underscored the importance of following health protocols for worshipping safely.

MORE: [www.mass.gov/worshipsafely](https://www.mass.gov/worshipsafely)

### **Added Isolation & Recovery Sites**

Since the beginning of the pandemic, the Commonwealth has established a network of hotels to provide a safe and therapeutic space for isolation and recovery for residents who test positive for COVID-19 but are in a

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situation where they cannot safely isolate. (e.g., homeless residents, people who live in group housing, residents who live with someone who is at high risk of COVID and cannot safely isolate from that person.) During the spring surge of cases, there were five such facilities located around the state.

Currently, isolation and recovery sites are located in **Everett, Taunton**, and beginning next week a new site will open in the city of **Pittsfield**. These sites serve individuals who are homeless or housing insecure under 400% of the federal poverty level. To date, more than 950 residents have been provided services at these isolation and recovery locations. The Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency provides supplies, meals, security, intake, and transportation if necessary. The Command Center works with Commonwealth Care Alliance and other clinical partners to provide medical and behavioral health services.

The Command Center monitors demand for isolation support closely and is prepared to open additional sites as demand increases. Future site decisions will consider regional geographic diversity and demand.

### *Important Updates*

#### **Department of Public Health Updates:**

- New information about monitoring hospital capacity, response to surge needs, and alternate medical sites in Worcester and Lowell, has been added to our COVID website: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-hospital-capacity-and-surge-response>.
- DPH is working with the COVID Command Center to assemble an external Vaccine Communications Group to advise on planning for a statewide public awareness campaign focused on building vaccine confidence and ensuring vaccine uptake. Keep updated on preparations for a COVID-19 vaccine by visiting [www.mass.gov/COVIDvaccine](http://www.mass.gov/COVIDvaccine).
- The daily dashboard and weekly public health report are published on Thursdays at 5pm. Look for both [here](#).
- MA211 received 4,045 calls from Monday 11/23 through Sunday 11/29 for a new total of 161,253.
- DPH received Week 4 allocations on 12/2 as follows: Bamlanivimab 600 doses and Regeneron 340 doses. The Therapeutics Working Group is recommending an equitable allocation strategy.
- For the date range of 11/20-11/26, 95 of 96 Massachusetts hospitals were 100% compliant in their COVID-19 data submissions to the DPH WebEOC portal which is submitted to the federal HHS Protect portal daily.
- Resurgence planning meetings are ongoing and Region 2, 3, 4abc, and 5 are now designated as Tier 2.
- Covid-19 Vaccine Planning continues, the team is focusing on the logistics around the vaccination campaign, as well as possible allocation models.
- There are currently 8 Rapid Response Teams deployed to nursing homes across the Commonwealth. At the end of this week there will be 10 teams and 14 teams by 12/19/2020.
- There are also 6 National Guard Teams deployed and supporting nursing and rest homes. There will be 8 teams available by the end of the week.
- DPH is collaborating on the establishment of [alternate medical sites](#) (or “Field Medical Stations”) to mitigate stress on health care systems as cases increase. Alternate medical sites are opening during December, including: UMASS Memorial Medical Center DCU Center Field Hospital (12/6/20, 7AM) and the Lowell General Hospital Field Hospital (date TBD).

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

##### **Mass Care**

- 2 state contracted isolation/recovery hotels in the cities of Everett and Taunton continue to receive client placements: 103 currently housed.
  - Top 5 referring cities:
    - Springfield (89)

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- Brockton (87)
- Boston (81)
- Worcester (70)
- Cambridge (69)
- To date, a total of 969 residents have been placed in these hotels for safe isolation and recovery.
- Hilton Garden Inn Pittsfield opens Dec 9, 2020.

Emergency Food Box Program Update (as of 12/3):

Food Bank/ MEMA Warehouse	Total Number of Food Boxes Distributed to Date	Total Number of Food Boxes Remaining in Inventory
Food Bank of Western MA	31259	0
Greater Boston Food Bank	204480	1824
Merrimack Valley Food Bank	3312	0
Worcester County Food Bank	1440	0
MEMA Warehouse (Reserve)	36869	3,456
<b>Total Food Boxes</b>	<b>277,360</b>	<b>5,280</b>

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

- 26 orders were prepared for pick up or delivery from the MEMA warehouse between 11/26 and 12/3.
- In coordination with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), MEMA delivered 586,500 adult sized cloth masks and 776,000 youth sized cloth masks to eight locations across the Commonwealth this week.
- To support continued community engagement through the CEIT Initiative, MEMA delivered 225,000 KN-95, 24,660 packs of alcohol-based hand wipes, and 144 sanitizer stations to 11 locations across the Commonwealth this week.
- MEMA’s cache of hospital equipment has been deployed to the DCU Center in Worcester, with three trailer loads of equipment being delivered on Monday, 11/30.
- A two-week supply cache has been delivered to the Pittsfield Isolation Hotel on 12/2, in anticipation of opening next week.
- DPH coordinated 49 deliveries to health care entities on Tuesday (12/1) (2 PPE/11 testing supplies and 36 BinaxNOW kits for LTC); 65 deliveries were made on Thursday (12/3) (4 PPE/10 testing supplies and 51 BinaxNOW kits for LTC) and 20 deliveries have been scheduled for Friday (12/4) (1 PPE/4 testing supplies and 15 BinaxNOW kits for LTC)

**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:

**FEMA Public Assistance Program**

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Data as of: 11/27/2020

**MEMA COVID-19 EXECUTIVE DASHBOARD**  
**AGGREGATE PROGRAM VIEW**

*Note: Financial data represents 75% federal cost share; figures do not include MEMA management cost allowance*

Overall (Best Available Estimate)	Submitted (Eligibility & Cost Review)	Approved (by FEMA)	Paid (by MEMA)
\$612.4M +\$10.17M	\$429.7M +\$7.02M	\$7.7M +\$7.40K	\$6.9M \$0
828 Projects 0	546 Projects +1	46 Projects +1	26 Projects 0

Approved Applicants: 617

- FEMA approved the Emergency Feeding Program for an additional 30-day period, through December 23, 2020.
- FEMA approved the Non-Congregate Sheltering Extension Request through December 30, 2020.
- MEMA successfully hosted 4 applicant all hands webinars (approximately 400 attendees) encompassing various municipalities, medical facilities, schools, and other PNP's statewide.
- MEMA will host an All Hands webinar for Higher Education Institutions on 12/10/2020.
- MEMA's Feeding Operations Project Worksheet (PW) has been submitted to FEMA for review for reimbursement.

**Long Term Recovery Program**

- A State Economic Recovery Plan meeting was held on Tuesday, December 1<sup>st</sup>, from 10:30 am – 12 pm. Several state agencies along with FEMA's Region 1 Long-Term Recovery Task Force and several federal agencies convened to discuss potential Federal support for the state-led Partnerships for Economic Recovery plan. Over a dozen federal programs were discussed during the call as well as next steps to help state agencies better understand available programs. This comprehensive plan is intended to stabilize and stimulate the Massachusetts economy.

COVID-19 Cases in Long-Term Care (LTC) Facilities (as of 12/3)	
Residents/Healthcare Workers of LTC Facilities	27,868
LTC Facilities Reporting at Least One Case of COVID-19	402
Deaths Reported in LTC Facilities	6,843



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

CALL US MONDAY THRU FRIDAY FROM 9AM-5PM



# COVID-19 RESPONSE COMMAND CENTER

## WEEKLY SITUATION REPORT

### Holyoke Soldiers' Home Weekly Update (current as of 12/1/20)

- The Soldiers' Home in Holyoke celebrated Thanksgiving with a full traditional Thanksgiving meal served on all units, including Turkey, mashed potatoes, stuffing, gravy, cranberry sauce, peas & carrots, and rolls. There was also pumpkin pie for dessert.
  - The Soldiers' Home had staff on hand on Thanksgiving Day to place FaceTime and phone calls for families to connect with their loved ones while visitation is suspended.
  - The recreation staff was at the Home on Thanksgiving Day to go room to room to help our veterans enjoy fiddle playing by Sarah, apple cider, coffee, tea, and Atkins apple cider donuts. In the afternoon, more room to room visits happened with ice cream and music.
  - Families were welcomed to bring premade food in containers to the Home for their loved one to enjoy throughout the day.
- On December 1, the Soldiers' Home in Holyoke was notified that a Veteran residing at Holyoke Medical Center began exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 and subsequently tested positive. The resident was previously negative and has been isolated and is being treated by HMC.
  - This resident is one of a handful of veterans who have resided in a dedicated skilled nursing unit at Holyoke Medical Center since April 2020.
  - Per protocol, all the previously negative residents at the Soldiers Home have completed this week's routine testing. All other residents at HMC are being tested.
- Also, on December 1, 2020, the Soldiers' Home in Holyoke was also notified that two non-direct care employees and one contracted staff member tested positive for COVID-19 following surveillance testing. All three individuals are non-direct care and do not interact directly with residents. Veterans, families, and staff have been notified.
  - Visitation was suspended and movement throughout the facility was suspending beginning November 20, 2020, for all units until further notice, and PPE protocols have been heightened.
  - On November 25, 2020, the Home learned that a non-direct care employee of the Home tested positive for COVID-19 through the surveillance testing program. Veterans, families, and staff have been notified.
- Families are encouraged to continue 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. Virtual 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).
  - Note: The Soldiers' Home can only share medical information about a resident with the authorized health care proxy on file.
- Phase II 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, began for the second floor on Monday, October 19. Phase I of the Refresh Project is complete and the veterans from the second floor have successfully and safely moved to their new rooms on the third floor.
- 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 weeks, the Home welcomed new permanent leadership and staff positions including an Infection Control RN, Clinical Educator, a Recreational Therapist, and four Certified Nursing Assistants.
- Veteran and Family Advisory Council meetings have resumed. The Veterans Advisory council met on Thursday, November 12, 2020, and the Family Advisory Council met on Thursday, November 19, 2020. The Veteran and Family Advisory Councils are run by veterans and families with assistance from the Soldiers' Home.



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- The Advisory Council helps the Home partner with veterans and families to provide constructive guidance amongst diverse perspectives and lived experiences.
- Through the feedback from the Veterans and Family Council, the Soldiers' Home in Holyoke hopes to integrate ideas into service delivery and quality improvement efforts to positively impact family and veteran-centered care.
- In addition to mandatory testing at state-operated 24/7 facilities, daily symptom checking and routine staff surveillance testing 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 Soldiers' Home in Holyoke 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.
- On Veterans Day, the Baker-Polito Administration announced the next steps for the expedited capital project for the Soldiers' Home in Holyoke. Following the conclusion of the 12-week Rapid Planning Phase of the project, the Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance released the needs assessment report and announced the selection of a vendor for the next phase.
  - The [Rapid Planning Phase](#) was launched in August to identify a sustainable, public health, implementation roadmap to provide significant upgrades to the Soldiers' Home in Holyoke. The architecture firm that led this project, Payette, wrote a report detailing its findings and recommended next steps. This report represents the culmination of research gathered by a broad group of veterans, families, veterans' organizations, the community, and other stakeholders through focus groups, interviews, and surveys. These recommendations reflect the learnings from those engagements, and the analysis of demographic data and services in Western Massachusetts. [Read the full report here.](#)
  - Payette has been conditionally selected pending execution of a contract as the design firm to lead the design and planning phase, the next step of the expedited capital project. Payette will build on the evaluation they previously completed, and will develop a full project scope, refine the plan, and confirm the budget, timelines, and ensure conformity with the regulatory process. One of the early deliverables is the preparation of the submission for the VA State Home Construction Grant by its April 15, 2021 deadline.
  - The website for the project is [www.mass.gov/HolyokeSHProject](http://www.mass.gov/HolyokeSHProject).
- 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 of all residents as of December 1 is as follows:
  - Status:

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- 1 veteran resident is positive and not clinically recovered – this veteran resides in a dedicated skilled nursing unit at Holyoke Medical Center and has not been at the Home since April
- 18 veteran residents are negative
- 38 veteran residents have a pending test
- 72 veteran residents have been determined clinically recovered
- 0 veteran residents have refused testing
- Locations:
  - 103 veteran residents are onsite
  - 26 veteran residents are offsite
    - 22 veterans are at a dedicated skilled nursing unit at Holyoke Medical Center
    - 4 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 4 tested positive
    - All others who previously tested positive are clinically recovered

### **Chelsea Soldiers' Home Weekly Update (current as of 12/1/20)**

- The Soldiers' Home in Chelsea celebrated Thanksgiving with a full traditional Thanksgiving meal served on all units, including Turkey, butternut squash, stuffing, gravy, cranberry sauce, peas & onions, baked stuffed sole, and rolls. There were also assorted pies for dessert.
  - Families were encouraged to contact their Veteran's respective ward to arrange for virtual visits on platforms such as FaceTime, Zoom, or Skype.
  - The recreation staff were at the Home on Thanksgiving Day to engage with the Veteran residents throughout the day.
  - On Saturday, the Quincy Elks sponsored a catered Thanksgiving meal for Soldiers' Home Long-Term Care Veterans.
  - Domiciliary Veterans enjoyed a Thanksgiving themed Bingo on Saturday.
- Long Term Care veterans have moved into their new private spaces following the completion of a short-term ward conversion project at the Soldiers' Home in Chelsea to enhance infection control and resident safety. This project will also incorporate negative air pressure to improve airflow, which will be utilized until the opening of the Community Living Center (Fall 2022). The Home has released a live link for families and staff to virtually tour newly designed private spaces for veteran residents in the Long Term Care: [Click here](#) to view a virtual tour of these areas.
- Beginning on Wednesday, November 18, the Soldiers' Home in Chelsea suspended visitation and movement throughout the facility for all units until further notice after receiving positive COVID-19 test results for staff. Veterans and families were immediately notified of the situation.
  - Visitation will resume after 14 consecutive days without a new positive test, and movement throughout the facility has been suspended until further notice. With the new positive test, it restarts the 14-day period.
  - On Saturday, November 28 the Soldiers' Home was notified that three non-direct care employees have tested positive through our surveillance testing.
- Families can 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

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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.
- The Soldiers' Home in Chelsea currently conducts 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.
- 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 December 1 is as follows:
  - Residents
    - 0 veteran residents are positive
    - 141 veteran residents are negative
    - 40 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 the most recent round of staff surveillance testing:
    - 6 employees are positive
    - All other employees who previously tested positive have been determined clinically recovered

## *Resources*

### **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.

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**

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.

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**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.

### **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/>

### **COVID-19 Test Site Locator**

MEMA, in conjunction with the COVID-19 Command Center, has developed an [interactive map](#) that shows the locations of COVID-19 testing sites around the Commonwealth.

### **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.

**Health care facilities** can learn more about [requesting personal protective equipment here](#).

## ***Stay Informed***

- Get information from trusted sources. Get notified by text, email, or phone call in your preferred language. Visit <https://member.everbridge.net/index/406686158291020/#/signup> to sign-up for **AlertsMA** for the latest news on the Commonwealth's response to COVID-19
- 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 Information Resources on Targeted Health Measures Available for Communities:**

The COVID-19 Command Center has produced new resources aimed at helping communities to inform and educate residents on recent executive orders and tips for less risky Thanksgiving gatherings.

**New Website:** [Mass.gov/holidays](https://www.mass.gov/holidays)

### **Executive Orders + Stay at Home Advisory one-pagers/flyers**

- Available in multiple languages at the links below:
  - [Public gathering guidance](#)
  - [Private gathering guidance](#)
  - [Face Mask order](#)
  - [Stay-at-home Advisory](#)

## COVID-19 RESPONSE COMMAND CENTER WEEKLY SITUATION REPORT

- [Early business closure & alcohol guidance](#)
- **Social Media posts on Thanksgiving Tips**
  - <https://www.facebook.com/massgov/posts/1728164364021213>
  - <https://www.instagram.com/p/CHQSE5Egi4B/>
  - <https://twitter.com/MassGov/status/1324736982275313664>
  - [https://nextdoor.com/post/167003750?init\\_source=copy\\_link\\_share](https://nextdoor.com/post/167003750?init_source=copy_link_share)

### Public Messaging Resources for Higher-Risk Communities

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

### DPH Communication Materials in Multiple Languages

- [Facts Sheets](#)
- [Videos](#)

## *How to Help Out*

- [Donate](#) to the Massachusetts COVID-19 Relief Fund.
- Volunteer opportunities for health professionals: [Please click 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](https://www.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](https://www.RedCrossBlood.org)