

Thursday, February 11, 2021

COVID-19 Command Center

Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency

Situation Update

The Command Center Situation Report is published weekly.
The next report will be published on Thursday, 2/18/21.



Governor Baker announces the vaccine public awareness campaign "Trust the Facts, Get the Vax" that launched earlier this week.

In This Week's Report:

- Latest Data: Public Health Update
- Week in Review: Key State Actions
 - \$64 Million Awarded in Grants to 1,312 Additional Businesses for COVID Relief
 - Announcement of Two Mass Vaccination Sites, New Appointments & Authorization for Caregivers
 - MA National Guard Begins Assisting with Community Vaccinations
 - Baker Administration Launches Vaccine Public Awareness Campaign, New Call Center for 75+ Residents
 - DPH, Emergency Management, and Disaster Recovery Updates
 - Holyoke and Chelsea Soldiers' Homes Weekly Update

Helpful Links:

- [COVID-19 Vaccination Locations](#)
- [When can I get the COVID-19 vaccine?](#)
- [COVID-19 Vaccine in Massachusetts](#)
- [Public Messaging Resources for Municipalities & Businesses](#)
- [Mass.gov/findfoodhelp](#)
- [HandHoldMA.org](#)
- [Reopening Massachusetts](#)
- [Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency](#)
- [Unemployment & COVID-19](#)
- [Dept. Of Transitional Assistance Online Portal](#)
- [COVID-19 Cost Eligibility and Tracking Guidance](#)



Situation in Numbers

Massachusetts **current as of 2/11**

523,258 Total Confirmed Cases ([click here for more information](#))

14,964 Deaths among confirmed cases

14,631,637 tests for the virus conducted to date by MA State Public Health Laboratory, hospitals, and commercial laboratories.

United States **Last Updated 2/11**

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:

27,127,858 Total Cases

470,110 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.

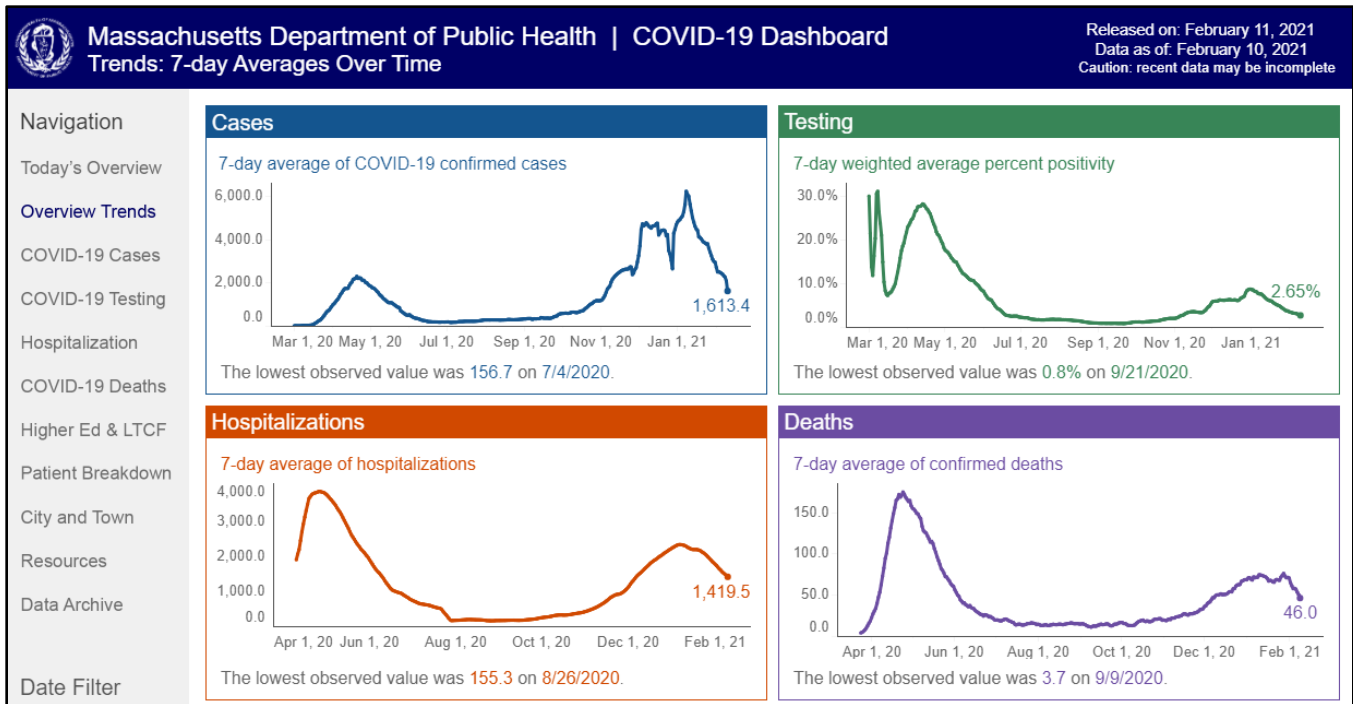
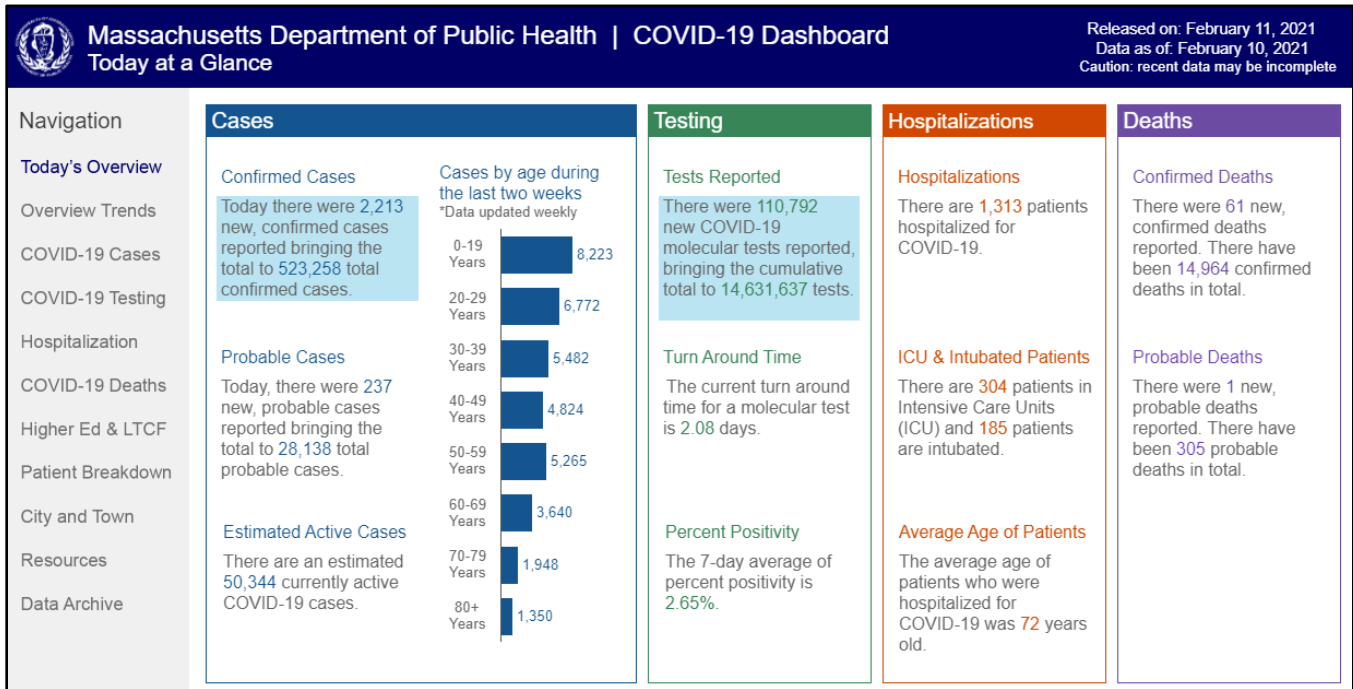
If you go out for essential needs:

- ✓ Avoid crowds
- ✓ Stay 6 feet away from others
- ✓ Don't shake hands or hug
- ✓ Wear a face covering or mask.

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WEEKLY SITUATION REPORT

Latest Data: COVID-19 Public Health Update

Key indicators from today's interactive dashboard are below.



Weekly Public Health Report:

The Command Center released the [Weekly Public Health Report, with town by town information, including the weekly listing of city and town risk levels](#) on Thursday, 2/11. The report also includes granular information on

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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

Baker-Polito Administration Awards \$64 Million in Grants to 1,312 Additional Businesses for COVID Relief

Today, the Baker-Polito Administration announced nearly \$64 million in awards to 1,312 additional businesses in the seventh round of COVID relief grants administered by the Massachusetts Growth Capital Corporation (MGCC). Each business meets sector and demographic priorities set for the two grant programs.

With the addition of this round of grant awards, the Administration has awarded approximately \$514 million in direct financial support to 11,212 businesses across the Commonwealth.



“As part of our ongoing commitment to supporting the Massachusetts business community, I’m pleased we are able to provide relief to another 1,312 hard hit businesses,” said Governor Charlie Baker. “With this round of awards, our efforts to deliver vital assistance to foster our economic recovery have now reached more than 11,000 businesses across the Commonwealth for a total of over a half billion dollars in direct financial support.”

“The COVID-19 public health crisis has hit small businesses hard, and there are communities and sectors that have seen their livelihoods significantly impacted through no fault of their own,” said Lt. Governor Karyn Polito. “We continue to target these grants to those businesses – whether they’re owned by women or minorities, located in Gateway Cities, or from sectors like restaurants and gyms – that need support the most.”

Among the sectors that received the highest total number of grants this round are: restaurants, bars, caterers, or food trucks (426); personal services businesses (173); and independent retailers (114).

In addition, grants for this round were awarded to 596 minority-owned, and 489 women-owned, businesses; 356 recipients are in Gateway Cities, and 352 businesses have not received any prior aid.

Acknowledging the importance of restaurants and independent retailers to communities across Massachusetts, business owners of multiple locations that met demographic and sector priorities are receiving awards to support up to two additional locations.

“Thanks to the team at MGCC, these grants create a key opportunity to sustain our small businesses by the thousands in every corner of Massachusetts,” said Housing and Economic Development Secretary Mike Kennealy. “Recognizing how critical a component our small businesses are to the Commonwealth’s economy, providing direct support has proven to be essential to our strategy for economic recovery.”

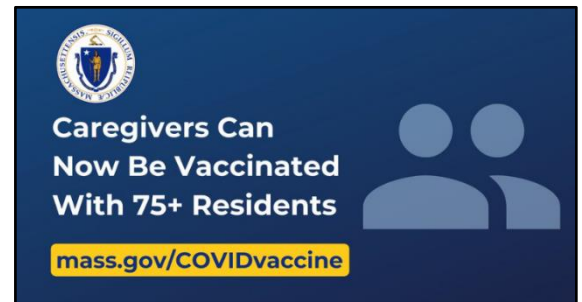
Following the [previous announcement](#) of grant awards on Feb. 4, MGCC began a process of engaging directly with applicants that met sector and demographic priorities but were missing documents necessary to be considered for an award. MGCC is continuing to work with business owners in targeted sectors and demographic groups over a two-week period to allow for applicants to submit necessary documents.

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The Commonwealth remains in Phase 3, Step 1 of the Baker-Polito Administration's reopening plan. On Monday, temporary capacity limits of 25% instituted during the second surge of COVID-19 were lifted, allowing many businesses to return to 40% capacity. In addition, restaurants and close contact personal services are now allowed to operate at a 40% capacity limit, with workers and staff not counting towards the occupancy count for these sectors.

Baker Administration Announces Two Mass Vaccination Sites, New Appointments & Authorization for Caregiver to Get Vaccinated with 75+ Resident

Yesterday, the Baker-Polito Administration announced two new mass vaccination sites will open in Natick and Dartmouth. On Thursday, 74,000 appointments will be posted online for mass vaccination sites and pharmacies at locations statewide. Approximately 30,000 additional appointments will be posted over the course of the week at pharmacies—totaling over 100,000 new appointments this week for mass vaccination sites and pharmacies.



The administration also announced that individuals who accompany someone age 75 or older to get a vaccine at a mass vaccination site may also schedule and receive their own vaccination on the same day.

Natick Mass Vaccination Site:

An additional mass vaccination site is scheduled to open on Monday, February 22, at the Natick Mall with LabCorp as the provider.

This site will begin administering 500 doses per day, then increasing over the course of several weeks to administering 3,000 doses daily. All eligible residents will be able to use this site. Eligible residents can begin booking appointments for the Natick site on February 18th. For appointment booking, visit mass.gov/covidvaccine.

Dartmouth Mass Vaccination Site:

An additional mass vaccination site is scheduled to open on Wednesday, February 24, at Circuit City with Curative as the provider.

This site will begin administering 500 doses per day, then increasing over the course of several weeks to administering over 2,000 doses daily. All eligible residents will be able to use this site. Eligible residents can begin booking appointments for the Dartmouth site on February 18th. For appointment booking, visit mass.gov/covidvaccine.

New Appointments at Mass Vaccination Sites & Pharmacies:

The Administration continues to build the Commonwealth's vaccination infrastructure and will add 30 new retail pharmacy sites and 2 additional mass vaccination sites. There are currently more than 130 vaccination sites in Massachusetts.

Friday (2/12) morning, more than 53,000 appointments will be posted online for mass vaccination sites for Springfield, Danvers, Foxborough (Gillette Stadium) and Boston (Fenway Park). Eligible individuals should visit mass.gov/covidvaccine for details on how to book.

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Over 50,000 pharmacy appointments will be posted online by the end of this week. 21,000 of these appointments are at new stores and will be live tomorrow. The 50,000 includes:

- CVS Health: 8,064 appointments were posted this week, with an additional 21,000 appointments going live tomorrow, and another 3,000 appointments being posted daily on Friday, Saturday and Sunday
- Walgreens: 7,620 appointments this week (over 1,000 released each day)
- Topco (Wegmans, Big Y, Price Chopper): 3,100 appointments this week
- Retail Business Services (Stop and Shop, Hannaford): 2,000 appointments this week

Caregiver Attestation for Mass Vaccination Sites:

Effective Thursday, February 11th, at mass vaccination sites, an individual who is accompanying a person age 75 or older to get the vaccine may schedule their own appointment to be vaccinated on the same day.

A caregiver must schedule their own appointment online for the same day and location as the 75 or older resident. Only one caregiver may accompany a 75 or older resident.

Mass vaccination locations will make every effort to take both individuals together to minimize wait time, even if the appointment times are not identical.

Directions to Schedule Two Appointments (for a 75+ resident & a caregiver):

Individuals can go to mass.gov/covidvaccine and schedule two separate appointments at either the same time or adjacent. For the companion appointment, select the option 'I am accompanying someone who is age 75+ to their vaccination appointment and my appointment is the same day.'

If individuals are unable to use or have difficulty accessing the internet, they may call 2-1-1 for assistance booking both appointments. Only one caregiver is permitted to schedule an appointment with the 75+ resident. A caregiver may receive their first dose of the vaccine if the 75+ resident is receiving their second dose.

Massachusetts National Guard Begins Assisting with Community Vaccinations

As part of the Commonwealth's COVID-19 Vaccination Plan, the Massachusetts National Guard has begun providing support of vaccination initiatives. Beginning last week, ten medically qualified Guard members are partnering with the East Boston Neighborhood Health Center (EBNHC) to administer vaccines in East Boston. On Tuesday, two teams of ten Guard members will be on site at the Springfield and Danvers mass vaccination sites to assist in administering vaccine.

Medically qualified soldiers and airmen began assisting with vaccine administration. Their assistance at EBNHC is expected to continue for at least three weeks to support four vaccination sites throughout EBNHC's service area including East Boston, Chelsea, Revere and the South End. The mission is federally funded. The Guard will continue to make qualified personnel available to the Executive Office of Health and Human Services for deployment to facilities requesting assistance.



The National Guard has personnel with a range of applicable expertise within its ranks, including physicians, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, nurses, emergency medical technicians, and medics. These individuals have already administered the vaccine to 1,000 eligible Massachusetts soldiers and airmen, and now shift their focus to assisting in clinical settings for eligible members of the public.

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The Massachusetts National Guard's first priorities are to save lives and protect property, and Guard personnel have assisted the Commonwealth since the earliest days of the crisis, providing a wide range of services to state agencies and local authorities. As a diverse and highly trained force whose members live and work in communities across the Commonwealth, the Guard has a proven track record of success supporting civilian authorities during and after state emergencies, and its units frequently train side-by-side with state and local first responders, making them well-suited for domestic operations.

About East Boston Neighborhood Health Center

The East Boston Neighborhood Health Center (EBNHC) has been a vital part of the community for 50 years, providing easily accessible, high-quality health care to all who live and work in East Boston and the surrounding communities of Chelsea, Revere, Everett, Winthrop, and, most recently, the South End. EBNHC is the largest community health center in Massachusetts and one of the largest in the nation, now serving nearly 120,000 patients and employing more than 1,300 staff members. EBNHC is proud to be a 2020 Forbes Best-in-State Employer and a six-time awardee of the Boston Globe's Top Places to Work.

Baker-Polito Administration Launches Vaccine Public Awareness Campaign, New Call Center for Residents 75 and Older

Last Friday, the Baker-Polito Administration announced a new multilingual public awareness campaign, "[Trust the Facts. Get the Vax.](#)" The research-driven, \$2.5 million campaign promotes the safety and efficacy of the COVID-19 vaccine and urges residents to get vaccinated when it is their turn, as vaccines continue to be distributed across the Commonwealth. The ads feature a diverse group of medical professionals who highlight the importance of the vaccine and aim to build trust with communities of color and other populations disproportionately impacted by COVID-19.



The Administration also announced a new call center to help residents 75 and older who are unable to access the vaccine appointment website to schedule vaccine appointments.

Public Awareness Campaign: The new statewide campaign explains how the vaccine works and seeks to build trust around its safety and efficacy with communities of color and other populations. The campaign is grounded in extensive survey research that indicated that these messages are most effectively delivered by medical professionals. TV ads in English and Spanish feature a diverse group of doctors who represent a wide range of races, ethnicities and regions of Massachusetts. Additional animated ads will run on TV and digital platforms in English, Spanish, Portuguese, Cape Verdean, Haitian Creole, Vietnamese, Chinese (Traditional & Simplified), Russian, Arabic and Albanian.

The first TV ad will run locally on Sunday, February 7, 2021, during the Super Bowl Kick-Off show. Throughout the next several weeks, the multilingual public awareness effort will be visible on a variety of additional platforms in several languages, including English, Spanish and Portuguese radio, paid social media and search ads in all languages, streaming services, and print advertising in English and Spanish outlets. A companion video in American Sign Language (ASL) is also launching today. [Click here to see all campaign materials.](#)

To develop the campaign, the Commonwealth relied on insights from a 1,000-person survey of Massachusetts residents that identified motivators and barriers around the vaccine, as well as the most effective messages and trusted voices. The Administration also consulted a 19-member external advisory group including community organizations, leaders from communities of color, health care providers, and local health officials.

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Additional elements of the campaign will launch throughout the vaccine distribution process. The campaign will continue to direct residents to www.mass.gov/COVIDvaccine, where residents can learn more about the safety and efficacy of the vaccine and when and where they will be able to get vaccinated.

Vaccine Scheduling Resource Line: Today, the Administration also announced a new call center to help residents 75 and older more easily schedule an appointment if they do not have internet or are unable to use the website at www.mass.gov/COVIDVaccine. The COVID-19 Vaccine Scheduling Resource Line is a dedicated telephone line available to residents 75 and older. The call center will be staffed with over 500 representatives who can provide live phone support to assist residents with booking an appointment. The line will be open Monday through Friday from 8:30 AM – 5:00 PM. Live call center workers will be available in English and Spanish, and 100 additional languages will be available through translators. Call center workers will have the same access to appointments that users will see on the public website.

The line can be accessed by dialing 2–1–1 and selecting the prompt for “Help Scheduling a Vaccine Appointment.” Residents may have to wait on the line given expected high call volume. Once connected with a representative, the caller will be asked to confirm he/she is 75 or older and either has no internet access or otherwise cannot use the website to book an appointment. Call-takers will then use the state’s COVID-19 vaccine site map to find nearby locations and determine whether appointments are available. If no appointments are available within a distance the caller can travel, then callers will be offered the chance to be placed on a call-back list for the mass vaccination sites. Residents will receive a call-back as appointments become available at these sites. Due to high demand and limited supply, callers may experience significant wait times. The Administration will monitor wait times and make necessary adjustments.

Important Updates

Department of Public Health Updates:

- DPH now posts a daily COVID-19 vaccine report, in addition to the Weekly data on Thursdays. You can find the daily data posted each day at 3:30 pm [here](#).
- Commissioner Bharel did a series of television and radio interviews today on the increasing availability of vaccine sites and appointments and the vaccine rollout. The WBUR interview is here: <http://ow.ly/HKTx50DxMKv>
- DPH issued an [Order](#) regarding access to certain immunization information for insurance carriers and MassHealth.
- DPH issued updated vaccine administration [guidance](#).
- DPH issued guidance regarding COVID-19 vaccine inventory management and administration.
- DPH issued a Bulletin – What Massachusetts COVID-19 Vaccine Providers Need to Know, for the week of 2/5. This Bulletin offers the Latest Numbers, Who to Vaccinate This Week, What to Know This Week, requesting doses for multiple types of clinics, Where to go when you have questions about COVID-19 vaccination, and Resources and Learning Opportunities.
- DPH Epidemiology Line handled 432 COVID-19 calls and 63 non-COVID-19 calls for a total of 495 calls from 2/1 through 2/7.
- As of 2/9, the Academic Public Health Volunteer Corps has 300 volunteers supporting 52 local boards of health. For more information about the Academic Public Health Volunteer Corps, please visit the [APHVC webpage](#) on Mass.gov.
- DPH received Cycle 10 allocations on 2/3 as follows: Bamlanivimab 100 doses and Regeneron 0 doses due to a repackaging project being conducted by the supplier. This allocation is for a two-week period. The Therapeutics Working Group is recommending an equitable allocation strategy.

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- There were 18 deliveries to health care entities on Monday (2/8) (2 PPE, 13 BinaxNOW kits and 3 therapeutic); 17 deliveries were made on Tuesday (2/9) (2 PPE and 15 BinaxNOW kits); 23 deliveries were made on Wednesday (2/10) (1 PPE/21 BinaxNOW kits and 1 therapeutic); 15 deliveries were made on Thursday (2/11) (3 testing supplies and 7 BinaxNOW kits and 5 therapeutic); and 10 deliveries have been scheduled for Friday (2/12) (1PPE/7 BinaxNOW kits and 2 therapeutic).
- HMCC Regions 1, 2, 3, and 4 are now in Tier 3, effective 2/8. This modification was made in accordance with the [DPH COVID-19 Resurgence Planning and Response Guidance for Acute Care Hospitals](#). HMCC Region 5 remains in Tier 4 as the hospitals in the region continue to respond to capacity constraints. DPH and the COVID-19 Command Center will continue to work closely with all regions to support strategies to improve hospital capacity statewide.
- For the date range of 1/29 – 2/4, 94 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.
- There are currently 12 Rapid Response Teams, primarily made up of medical staff, deployed to nursing homes across the Commonwealth. Teams are also helping nursing homes on the day of their Vaccine Clinics to ensure staff and residents are monitored after vaccination.
- There are 6 National Guard Teams deployed and supporting nursing and rest homes.
- DPH collaborated on the establishment of [alternate medical sites](#) (or “Field Medical Stations”) to mitigate stress on health care systems as cases increased. The [Lowell General Hospital Alternative Care Site](#) opened on 1/4/21 and will be closing on 2/14/21 due to a decrease in COVID-19 hospitalizations. The [UMASS Memorial Medical Center DCU Center Field Hospital](#) opened on 12/6/20. In addition, DPH has contracted with ambulance services in each of the five EMS Regions to help ensure transport capability to alternate medical sites.

Emergency Management and Disaster Recovery Updates:

Mass Care

- 4 state contracted isolation/recovery hotels in the communities of Everett, Pittsfield, Taunton, and Wakefield continue to receive client placements: 119 individuals are currently housed in the program.
 - Top 5 referring cities:
 - Boston (319)
 - Worcester (184)
 - Springfield (160)
 - Cambridge (117)
 - Brockton (110)
 - To date, a total of 1,980 residents have been placed in these hotels for safe isolation and recovery, an increase of 81 since last week.

Community Food Box Program Update (2/5 to 2/11):

MEMA is partnering with the Salvation Army, and a vendor, to bring in shelf-stable food boxes each week to support communities in their effort to deliver food to individuals and families in quarantine and isolation who require assistance accessing food. Each week MEMA’s warehouse receives a delivery of shelf-stable food boxes. Distribution of food boxes is coordinated between MEMA and communities in need via a request through WebEOC. The table below reflects the current food box inventory, and number of food boxes distributed to communities during the weekly reporting period (data is updated every Friday).

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Total Number of Food Boxes in MEMA's Inventory	Total Number of Food Boxes Distributed to One or More Local Communities During the Reporting Period	Total Number of Communities that Received Food Boxes During the Reporting Period
4,459	911	10

Logistics (including Personal Protective Equipment and Supplies)

- 19 Orders prepared for pickup or delivery from the MEMA State Logistics Warehouse from 2/5-2/11.
- The Isolation Hotels in Everett and Wakefield received PPE re-supplies this week.

Disaster Recovery

On March 27, 2020, 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:

- New project obligations (17): **\$217,406,413.40**
- Total RDU Applicants: **55**
- 100% completed with Exploratory Calls
- Anticipated Costs Being Submitted through RDU: **\$872,843,297**
- Technical Assistance Meetings Conducted with RDU Applicants (excludes exploratory calls): **531 (+21)**
- Project Worksheets submitted to FEMA: **22**
- Project Worksheets obligated: **8**
- Distributed updated guidance based on FEMA's 100% cost share adjustment
- Conducted webinar to review guidelines for COVID-19 vaccination expenses and provided responses to all applicant questions

Data as of: 2/5/2021

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)
\$906.0M +\$8.11M	\$684.4M +\$891.35K	\$504.9M +\$213.30M	\$290.0M +\$282.15M
912 Projects +11	632 Projects +5	90 Projects +2	63 Projects +13

Approved Applicants: 646

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COVID-19 Cases in Long-Term Care (LTC) Facilities (as of 2/11)	
Residents/Healthcare Workers of LTC Facilities	34,306
LTC Facilities Reporting at Least One Case of COVID-19	422
Deaths Reported in LTC Facilities	8,303



Holyoke Soldiers’ Home Weekly Update (current as of 2/9/21)

- Following the completion of Phase II of the Refresh Project, Veterans residing at Holyoke Medical Center since April 2020 have returned to the Soldiers' Home in Holyoke in a project known as Operation Bring'em Home. The refresh project is an important initiative to ensure infection control standards are met throughout the Soldiers’ Home in Holyoke.
- CVS Health returned to the Home on February 9 for the third and final onsite vaccine clinic, to administer second doses of the vaccine to those vaccinated, and first doses to individuals who newly consented. The first and second vaccination clinics were held on December 29 and January 19. Vaccination numbers will be updated following the final onsite clinic. Following the completion of the second set of vaccination clinics.
 - At the Soldiers’ Home in Holyoke, 117 veteran residents and 220 staff have received both doses.
 - 1 veteran resident and 10 staff have received their first dose.
- The Home is strongly encouraging all staff to receive the vaccine. On top of the efforts to provide educational information about the COVID-19 vaccine, including COVID-19 vaccine FAQ sheets, and vaccine informational forums with clinical staff, individuals who had not been vaccinated received individual outreach to provide education and encourage vaccination. All educational materials are available in both English and Spanish.
- The Soldiers’ Home in Holyoke will be opening in-person visitation for veteran residents and their loved ones on Wednesday February 10, 2021. The Home is implementing updated guidance from DPH to ensure the safety and wellbeing of residents, staff, and those visiting. Visitation will begin tomorrow, following the third and final vaccination on-site vaccination clinic today.
 - All visitors will be screened and required to wear PPE and social distance, and negative test results are strongly encouraged before visiting. There is designated visitation space at each Home, and high touch surfaces will be sanitized after each visit.
 - At the Soldiers’ Home in Holyoke, visitation will take place Tuesday through Saturday, from 9:00am to 3:00pm, and 24 slots will be offered each day. Visits will be scheduled for at least 45 minutes.
 - Visits can be scheduled by calling the Family Line at 413-552-4764. 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
 - We expect many loved ones will request visits immediately. At this time, we are asking that loved ones schedule one visit each week, and as more availability becomes available, more may be scheduled.
 - The Soldiers’ Home in Holyoke will also continue to offer and support virtual visitation.
 - The Family Line is available for ad hoc updates with support from social work and clinical staff. Families can also request updates via email at CommunicationsMailbox-HLY@Mass.gov. Note:

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The Soldiers' Home can only share medical information about a resident with the authorized health care proxy on file.

- The Soldiers' Home is working with Home Base, a veteran support organization that is a partnership of the Red Sox Foundation and Massachusetts General Hospital, to help improve the quality of life, increase psychosocial interventions to address isolation during the pandemic. Home Base has linked us to virtual concerts provided by professional and amateur volunteers. The concerts are interactive—featuring musical performances and conversation between the Veterans and musicians. The concerts occur every Tuesday and Thursday afternoon. The team at Home Base is working with Social Work, Recreation and Nursing to provide other opportunities for virtual activities.
 - Home Base has extended their free veteran counseling offerings to our Soldier's Home families and staff.
- The Soldiers' Home in Holyoke is taking every precaution to mitigate COVID-19 entering and spreading at the Soldiers' Home in Holyoke. Based on guidance from DPH, and in consultation with infection control experts, the Home is continuing mandatory 2 times per week testing for all staff and residents. Increased testing frequency will allow us to detect COVID-19 early and will continue until the Home receives 14 consecutive days of negative results.
 - 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.
- 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 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.
- The Commonwealth has been making capital investments to address the short and long-term needs of the Home. This includes a short-term Refresh Project and a longer-term Rapid Planning Capital Project for a future Soldiers' Home in Holyoke. While the expedited capital project will address long-term facility needs, the Executive Office of Health and Human Services, Department of Veterans' Services, and Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance have been addressing immediate capital needs, including a \$6 million refresh of units to significantly improve infection control for the residents and staff.
 - 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 Payette Associates for the next phase 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.

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- 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 February 9 is as follows:
 - Status:
 - 0 veteran residents are positive and not clinically recovered
 - 4 veteran residents are negative
 - 41 veteran residents have a pending test. Please note that all veteran residents and staff are now being tested twice weekly, which will increase the number of pending tests.
 - 76 veteran residents have been determined clinically recovered
 - 0 veteran residents have refused testing
 - Resident locations:
 - 117 veteran residents are onsite
 - 4 veteran residents are receiving acute care offsite
 - Since March 1, there have been 77 deaths of veteran residents who tested positive
- Following the most recent staff surveillance testing
 - 3 are positive
 - All others who previously tested positive are clinically recovered

Chelsea Soldiers' Home Weekly Update (current as of 2/9/21)

- CVS Health returned to the Home on February 9 for the third and final onsite vaccine clinic, to administer second doses of the vaccine to those vaccinated, and first doses to individuals who newly consented. The first and second vaccination clinics were held on December 29 and 30, and January 19 and 20. Following the completion of the onsite vaccination clinics:
 - **159** residents and **208** staff have received both doses.
 - **6** veteran residents and **67** staff have received their first dose.
- The Soldiers' Home in Chelsea is opening in-person visitation for veteran residents and their loved ones tomorrow, Wednesday February 10, 2021. The Home is implementing updated guidance from DPH to ensure the safety and wellbeing of residents, staff, and those visiting. Visitation will begin tomorrow, following the third and final vaccination on-site vaccination clinic today.
 - All visitors will be screened and required to wear PPE and social distance, and negative test results are strongly encouraged before visiting. There is designated visitation space at each Home, and high touch surfaces will be sanitized after each visit.
 - We expect many loved ones will request visits immediately. At this time, we are asking that loved ones schedule one visit each week, and as more availability becomes available, more may be scheduled.
 - At the Soldiers' Home in Chelsea, visitation will take place Monday through Friday 9:00am-7:30pm, and 8 slots will be offered each day; and Saturday & Sunday from 1pm-4pm, and 3 slots will be offered each day. Visits will be scheduled for at least 45 minutes long. Visits can be scheduled by Diane Rennie at (617) 887-7160 [or diane.rennie@mass.gov](mailto:diane.rennie@mass.gov)
 - The Soldiers' Home in Chelsea will also continue to offer and support virtual visitation.
 - Families can request updates on their loved ones by contacting their assigned social worker, or emailing the Home at CSH@mass.gov. Medical information can only be shared with an authorized health care proxy.
- The Home remains vigilant in its infection control, including enhanced precautions throughout the facility and strict infection control protocols to keep veteran residents and staff safe, including continuing staff education, screening, and testing.

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- 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.
- The Soldiers' Home in Chelsea currently weekly staff surveillance testing. In accordance with [CMS rules](#), 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 February 9 is as follows:
 - Residents
 - 1 veteran resident is positive, all in independent living
 - 127 veteran residents are negative
 - 47 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 staff surveillance testing:
 - 9 employees are positive
 - All other employees who previously tested positive have been determined clinically recovered

Communications Resources

Public Messaging Resources for Communities:

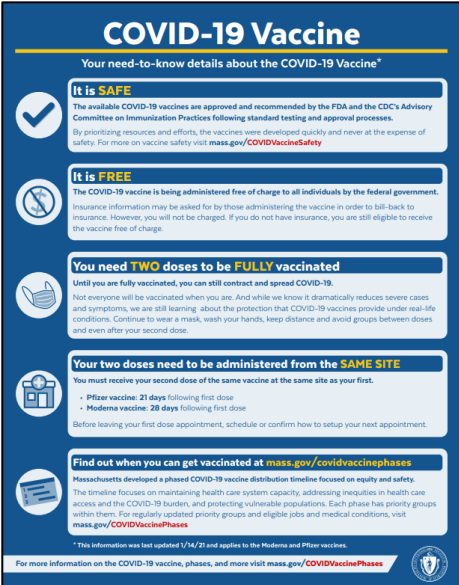
The COVID-19 Command Center has produced many communication resources aimed at helping communities inform and educate residents on recent executive orders and guidance related to COVID-19.

[Visitors to the Stop COVID-19 Public Messaging webpage](#) will find both printable flyers, posters, and digital resources in multiple languages on topics such as:

- [When can I get the COVID-19 vaccine?](#)
- [Vaccine Graphics](#)
- Statewide guidelines, advisories, and orders
- Staying safe in the community
- Using local public alert systems for COVID-19 information
- Materials for Business
 - [Return to work guidance](#)
 - [Employee Screening Questionnaire](#)
 - [Business guidance – New, Temporary Capacity Limits](#)
 - [Updated safe store tips for retailers](#)

DPH Communication Materials in Multiple Languages

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



COVID-19 Vaccine
Your need-to-know details about the COVID-19 Vaccine*

- It is SAFE**
The available COVID-19 vaccines are approved and recommended by the FDA and the CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices following standard testing and approval processes. By prioritizing resources and efforts, the vaccines were developed quickly and never at the expense of safety. For more on vaccine safety visit mass.gov/COVIDVaccineSafety
- It is FREE**
The COVID-19 vaccine is being administered free of charge to all individuals by the federal government. Insurance information may be asked for by those administering the vaccine in order to bill-back to insurance. However, you will not be charged. If you do not have insurance, you are still eligible to receive the vaccine free of charge.
- You need TWO doses to be FULLY vaccinated**
Until you are fully vaccinated, you can still contract and spread COVID-19. Not everyone will be vaccinated when you are. And while we know it dramatically reduces severe cases and symptoms, we are still learning about the protection that COVID-19 vaccines provide under real-life conditions. Continue to wear a mask, wash your hands, keep distance and avoid groups between doses and even after your second dose.
- Your two doses need to be administered from the SAME SITE**
You must receive your second dose of the same vaccine at the same site as your first.
 - Pfizer vaccine: 21 days following first dose
 - Moderna vaccine: 28 days following first doseBefore leaving your first dose appointment, schedule or confirm how to setup your next appointment.
- Find out when you can get vaccinated at mass.gov/covidvaccinephases**
Massachusetts developed a phased COVID-19 vaccine distribution timeline focused on equity and safety. The timeline focuses on maintaining health care system capacity, addressing inequities in health care access and the COVID-19 burden, and protecting vulnerable populations. Each phase has priority groups within them. For regularly updated priority groups and eligible jobs and medical conditions, visit mass.gov/COVIDVaccinePhases

*This information was last updated 1/14/21 and applies to the Moderna and Pfizer vaccines.
For more information on the COVID-19 vaccine, phases, and more visit mass.gov/COVIDVaccinePhases

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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

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.

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](#).

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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.

How to Help Out

- Work at an Alternate Care Site in either [Worcester](#) or [Lowell](#)
- [Donate](#) to the Massachusetts COVID-19 Relief Fund

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