

Thursday, August 27, 2020

COVID-19 Command Center

Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency

Situation Update

The Command Center Situation Report is published weekly on Thursdays.

In This Week's Report:

- Latest Data: Public Health Update
- Week in Review: Key State Actions



Governor Baker & Lt. Governor Polito announced the "My Local MA" advertising campaign this week to support local business impacted by COVID-19.

- \$10 Million in Federal Funding to Support Local and State COVID-19 Response
- New Free COVID-19 Testing Site in Winthrop
- Massachusetts Launches "My Local MA" Campaign to Drive Economic Activity and Safely Support Small and Local Businesses
- DPH, Emergency Management, and Disaster Recovery Updates
- Holyoke and Chelsea Soldiers' Homes Weekly Update

Helpful Links:

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

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 8/27**

117,450 Total Confirmed Cases ([click here for more information](#))

8,775 Deaths among confirmed cases

1,649,836 individuals tested for the virus to date by MA State Public Health Laboratory, hospitals and commercial laboratories.

United States **Last Updated 8/27**

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:

5,799,046 Total Cases

178,998 Deaths

55 Jurisdictions Reporting Cases (50 states, D.C., Puerto Rico, Guam, Northern Marianas, and US V.I.)

Social Distancing Basics:

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

If you go out for essential needs:

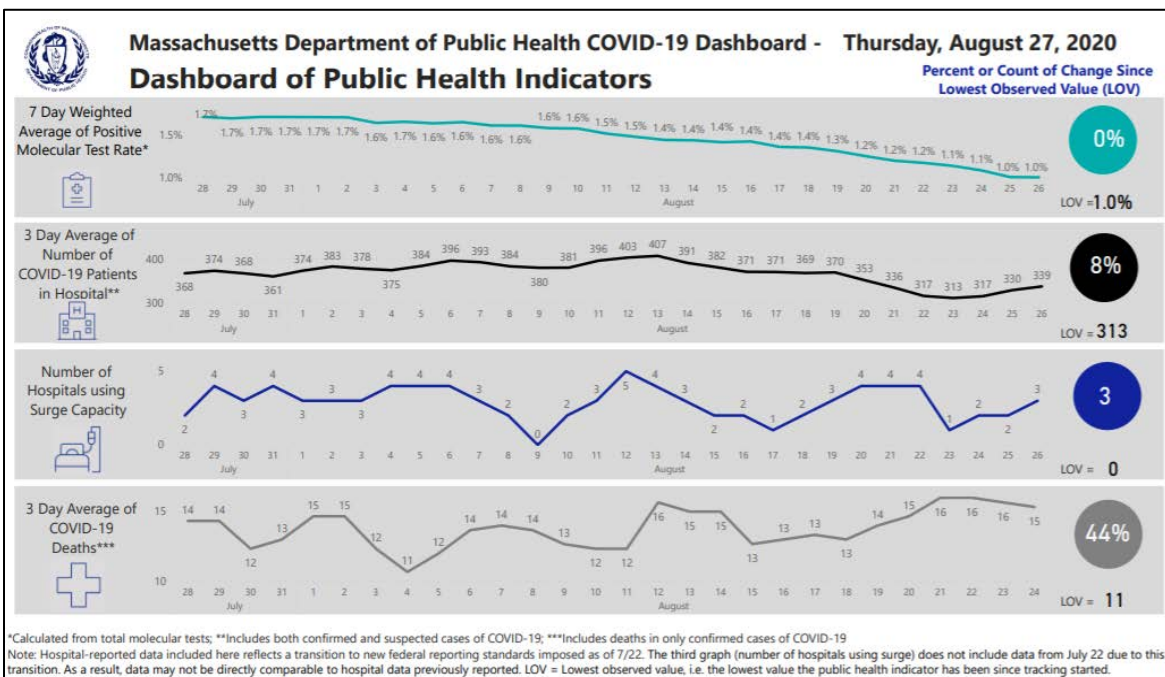
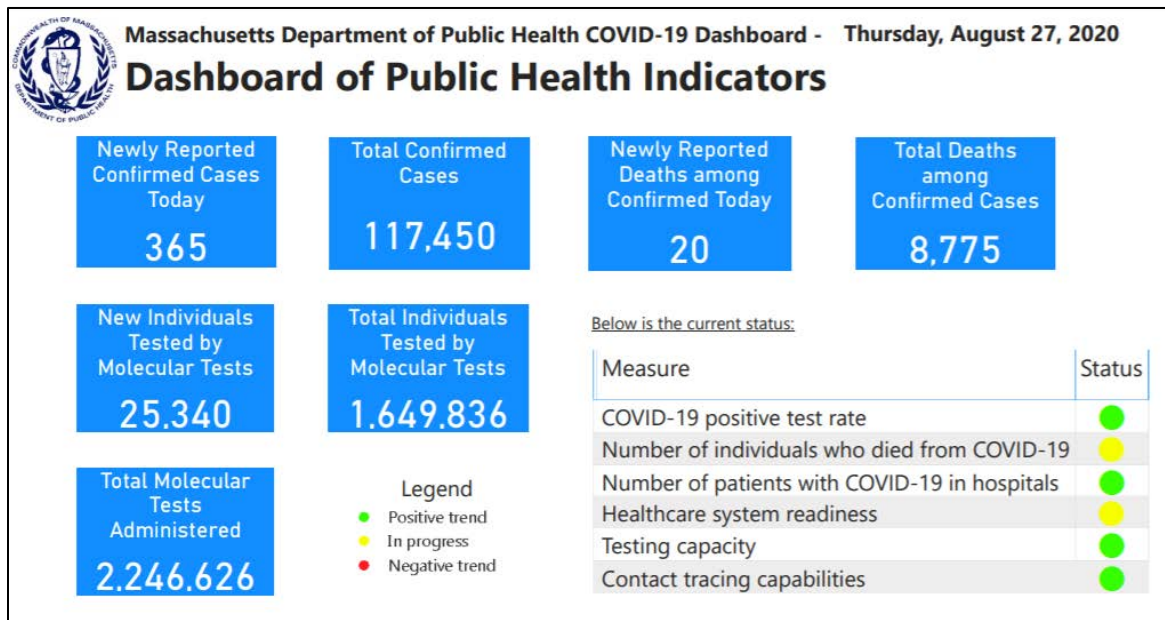
- ✓ Avoid crowds
- ✓ Stay 6 feet away from others
- ✓ Don't shake hands or hug
- ✓ Wear a face covering or mask if physical distancing is not possible.

Latest Data: COVID-19 Public Health Update

Testing Update:

Today, more than **25,000** new individuals tested by molecular (viral) tests were reported in Massachusetts with **365** newly reported confirmed positive cases. The total molecular tests administered to date is more than **2.2 million**.

Hospitalizations & Capacity Update: As of today, **333** people are hospitalized, with **61** reported to be in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU). Key indicators from today's Daily Dashboard are below.



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New Weekly Public Health Data Report Released

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

DPH has also posted an archive of previously released city and town data dating back to April on the COVID-19 reporting page. The Weekly Public Health Report includes also includes data on recoveries, along with detailed case and death data related to long term care facilities. The report also includes information on new nursing facility staff baseline testing, infection control audits, and more. You can find all the data reports, raw data files, by visiting the [COVID-19 Response Reporting page](#).

Week in Review: State Actions

Baker-Polito Administration Awards Nearly \$10 Million in Federal Funding to Support Local and State COVID-19 Response

The Baker-Polito Administration allocated more than \$9.6 million in federal Coronavirus Emergency Supplemental Funding Program (CESFP) grants awarded to the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security's Office of Grants and Research (OGR) from the U.S. Department of Justice. More than 100 local and state public safety agencies will receive this funding for additional resources to further aid in preventing, preparing for and/or responding to the Coronavirus.



"These awards to municipal departments and state agencies across the Commonwealth demonstrate our commitment to providing our police officers, firefighters, and other public safety personnel with the necessary tools to effectively serve their communities while continuing to fight a pandemic," **said Governor Charlie Baker**.

Eligible municipalities were invited to solicit up to \$50,000 in total funding to benefit their police and/or fire department needs. In total, 65 fire departments and 44 police departments representing 94 cities and towns will directly benefit from the CESFP awards.

"These grants will help aid local municipalities to purchase the additional safeguards necessary to protect our frontline workers against COVID-19," **said Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito**. "Massachusetts has made great strides in slowing the spread of this virus, and we will continue to support our local heroes with the resources they need to protect themselves and their communities."

CESFP awards were also made available for competitive solicitation by state public safety agencies responsible for confronting the pandemic. The funding will assist agencies with outfitting staff with personal protective gear, purchasing deep cleaning sanitation equipment for correctional facilities and academies, utilizing video technology to conduct hearings remotely, and obtaining materials to reconfigure office space to enhance social distancing and protect essential workers.

"These funds will address critical needs that will not only protect our essential public safety employees but also the people they protect and serve," **said Public Safety and Security Secretary Thomas Turco**.

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“These awards are well deserved and my office is committed to doing all that it can to continue providing the financial resources needed to assist our state and local officials in their efforts to combat this pandemic,” said **OGR Executive Director Kevin Stanton**.

New Free COVID-19 Testing Site in Winthrop

Yesterday, the Baker-Polito Administration announced the continued expansion of its “Stop the Spread” initiative, which provides free COVID-19 testing in targeted communities across the Commonwealth, with a new testing site in Winthrop. ([Press release here](#)).

This site joins testing sites in 20 other communities: Agawam, Brockton, Chelsea, Everett, Fall River, Framingham, Holyoke, Lawrence, Lowell, Lynn, Marlborough, Methuen, New Bedford, Randolph, Revere, Salem, Saugus, Springfield, Taunton, Winthrop, and Worcester.



The Stop the Spread initiative is a data-driven targeted effort to reduce the prevalence of COVID-19 in communities that are above the state average in total cases and positive test rates, and have experienced a decline in testing levels since April. All residents of these 21 communities, including asymptomatic individuals, are urged to get tested at one of these locations. While the sites are in targeted communities, these testing resources are open to all residents of the Commonwealth.

Between August 2 and August 15, Winthrop’s average daily COVID-19 incidence rate per 100,000 residents was 11.37, trending higher than the community’s previous case count period.

Massachusetts Launches “My Local MA” Campaign to Drive Economic Activity and Safely Support Small and Local Businesses

On Tuesday, Governor Charlie Baker and Lt. Governor Karyn Polito announced the launch of an effort to encourage residents of the Commonwealth to support their local economies by shopping at local Massachusetts businesses and attractions, safely – in person, online, and using curbside pickup or takeout. The Baker-Polito Administration’s “My Local MA” advertising campaign is kicking off this Friday in tandem with the [Sales Tax-Free Weekend](#) taking place August 29-30, and was developed as a response to the economic impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had on Massachusetts local businesses and communities. ([Press release here](#)).



The intent of the campaign is to showcase Massachusetts’ vast array of businesses and attractions – from family owned-restaurants to artisan boutiques to museums – that are a critical part of the Commonwealth’s economy. From Stockbridge to Provincetown, our local retailers and restaurants are open for business, utilizing safe practices and, in many cases, for online shopping, curbside pickup or takeout and delivery.

The campaign, running through December, will include print, broadcast, billboard and digital ads, along with social media. The website, [FindMyLocalMA.com](#), will feature resources for consumers and more information on the campaign.

Supporting beloved local businesses also means acting responsibly. “Masking up” and practicing social distancing will be emphasized throughout the campaign to protect our quality of life and ensure that businesses

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can safely serve customers.

The Commonwealth's small business community plays a vital role in the composition of the Massachusetts economy. According to the [US Small Business Administration](#) in their 2019 Small Business Profile, small businesses in Massachusetts employ approximately 1.5 million workers, accounting for approximately 45 percent of the Commonwealth's total workforce. Through "My Local MA," residents are encouraged to protect and preserve those elements that make Massachusetts unique.

For information, visit FindMyLocalMA.com.

This year's Sales-Tax Free Weekend will take place on Saturday, August 29, and Sunday, August 30. In 2018, Governor Baker [signed legislation](#) that makes the annual sales tax holiday permanent. For more information about this year's annual sales tax holiday, please review these [Frequently Asked Questions](#).

Important Updates

Department of Public Health Updates:

- DPH hosted multiple inter-agency calls with local health officials and shared resources to provide support and technical assistance on topics including coordination of contact tracing with boarding schools and colleges and universities, flu vaccination requirements, and joint guidance from DPH and Department of Elementary and Secondary Education on key health and safety requirements for schools.
- DPH issued updated guidance for surveillance testing for long term care facilities that can be found [here](#). Compliance with the testing guidance is required at nursing homes and rest homes, and recommended for assisted living residences.
- Federal National Supply Chain Task Force is distributing 45,430 N95 respirators to 78 nursing homes in Massachusetts to supplement their normal supply process.
- MA211 responded to almost 3,000 calls related to COVID-19 between August 21 and August 27, bringing the new total of calls to 108,506.

Emergency Management and Disaster Recovery Updates:

Mass Care

- 2 state contracted quarantine/isolation hotels in the communities of Northampton and Everett continue to receive client placements.
 - Currently 11 residents are housed in these hotels (change of -6 since last Thursday)
 - Isolation support will continue in support of the "Stop the Spread" testing initiative.
 - Resident demographics have shifted from being primarily individuals experiencing homelessness to mostly referrals for individuals living with high-risk household members and individuals living in overcrowded households.
- A total of 128,290 meals have been distributed to date through state contracted hotel sites and distributions of food boxes and meal bags.
- Tent operations supporting homeless individuals continue in Haverhill.
- Update to state sheltering plans for COVID-19 pandemic has been completed and is a part of the COVID-19 Supplemental Planning Document.

Logistics (including Personal Protective Equipment and Supplies)

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- 200,000 cloth face coverings were received by FEMA today, 8/27/2020.
- Of the 71 College Police Department KN-95 mask allocations, 20 remain to be picked up
- Over the last week, 36 orders were prepared for pickup or delivery from MEMA’s State Logistics Warehouse.
- DPH has coordinated 12 deliveries to health care entities on Tuesday (8/25) (5 PPE/7 testing supplies), and 14 deliveries have been scheduled for Friday (8/28) (5 PPE/9 testing supplies- one facility requested both PPE and testing supplies).

Disaster Recovery

On March 27, the President [declared](#) a Major Disaster Declaration for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts related to the COVID-19 pandemic response. Through this declaration, federal aid will be made available to cities and towns, state agencies, and certain non-profits in all Massachusetts counties to help pay for emergency protective measures (response costs) related to the COVID-19 pandemic. MEMA’s Recovery Unit has developed a [webpage](#) with information and guidance on, but not limited to, disaster declaration, eligibility criteria, and the application process. Highlights from the Disaster Recovery process include the following:

- Total FEMA RPA Applicants: 567 (+0)
- Total # Obligated Projects: 25 / \$ 7,749,110.08 (+4 / +\$ 224,805.66)
- Total # of Payments Disbursed: 13 / \$ 1,093,259.82 (+6/ +\$ 487,250.29)
- Total # of Partial Payments Disbursed: 1 / \$170,759.77 (+0 / +\$0)
- Online Applicant Technical Assistant Requests: 437 (+11)
- Continuing to provide technical assistance to project applicants.
- MEMA’s request for a time extension on Emergency Food Purchase and Distribution was approved by FEMA. The deadline has been extended from August 24, 2020 to September 24, 2020.
- FEMA extended the Period of Performance for Public Assistance cost eligibility from September 27, 2020 to indefinitely.
- FEMA [approved the Commonwealth's Lost Wages Assistance grant](#) application, which will make additional disaster unemployment funds available to eligible applicants through the MA Department of Unemployment Assistance.



COVID-19 Cases in Long-Term Care (LTC) Facilities (as of 8/27)	
Residents/Healthcare Workers of LTC Facilities	24,584
LTC Facilities Reporting at Least One Case of COVID-19	379
Deaths Reported in LTC Facilities	5,772



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

CALL US MONDAY THRU FRIDAY FROM 9AM-5PM



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Holyoke Soldiers' Home Weekly Update

- Outdoor visitation between veterans and loved ones continues, following the [outdoor visitation plan](#), which is contingent on the continued stability of infection control and public health metrics. 80 Outdoor visits occurred last week, and approximately 670 visits have been held to date.
 - Video visits between veteran residents and their loved ones are continuing, and the Family Hotline is available for ad hoc updates with support from social work and clinical staff.
 - Families can call the Family Hotline 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. Please note the Soldiers' Home can only share medical information about a resident with the authorized health care proxy on file.
- The Soldiers' Home in Holyoke is closely monitoring the health of all veterans and staff and is retesting individuals. The most recent round of testing done resulted in no positive tests. Outside of regular facility testing, residents are closely monitored and if there is any sign of COVID-like symptoms, they are immediately retested.
- The Soldiers' Home's medical team is making all clinical decisions following [the latest CDC guidance](#), which continues to evolve as the medical community learns more about this new virus. The CDC recommends making medical decisions regarding when to end isolation and determine that the patient has recovered based on symptoms and time elapsed.
 - Since the start of the pandemic, more than 80 residents had been determined clinically recovered, which means that they at one point tested positive for COVID-19 but are now considered clinically recovered as defined by federal CDC guidance.
 - The Home continues to adhere to infection control protocols throughout the Home and continues the cohorting of veterans with the same status.
- 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 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.
- Holyoke's Clinical Command continues to respond to the COVID-19 outbreak, monitoring staffing levels, while bringing on additional management staff for nursing, facilities, and administration. The Holyoke Soldiers' Home has been intently focused on following infection control procedures and maintaining best practices for the safety of veteran residents and staff, and to support the recovery of veterans as the health status of many stabilizes. All veteran residents' health is being monitored and retesting is being conducted for veterans both on- and off-site as clinically appropriate.
- The Baker-Polito Administration selected a vendor and has started work on an expedited capital project to reimagine the future of the Soldiers' Home in Holyoke. Payette has been awarded the contract for the first phase of the expedited capital project, the Rapid Planning Phase, which consists of completing a needs assessment and conducting stakeholder engagement. DCAMM anticipates the cost of the contract will be \$250,000. This work will inform the development of the implementation plan to meet the April 15, 2021 federal Veterans' Affairs' State Home Construction Grant application deadline. More about the capital project is available [here](#).
- **The current status as August 25 is as follows:**
 - The current status of all residents:
 - 0 positive and not clinically recovered
 - 61 veterans are negative

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- 0 residents have a pending test
- 80 residents have been determined clinically recovered
- 1 resident has refused testing
- Resident locations:
 - 116 veterans are onsite
 - 26 veterans are offsite
 - 24 veterans are at a dedicated skilled nursing unit at Holyoke Medical Center
 - 2 veterans are receiving acute care offsite
- Since March 1, there have been 76 veteran deaths of veterans who tested positive
- All employees had been determined clinically recovered, In the most recent round of testing,
 - 0 tested positive
 - All who previously tested positive are clinically recovered

Chelsea Soldiers' Home Weekly Update

- The Chelsea Soldiers' Home continues to welcome visitors for outdoor visitation between veterans and loved ones and at the start of this week there had been approximately 390 visits. Following [visitation guidance](#), the Home's protocols prioritize the health and safety of Veterans and staff, with continued focus on infection control. Ongoing plans are contingent on the continued stability of infection controls and public health metrics, which we continue to monitor daily and coordinate with state and local health officials.
 - Outdoor visitation is occurring in addition to continued video visits between veteran residents and their loved ones. Families can also request updates on their loved ones by contacting the Home at CSH@mass.gov and through phone and video conversations. Medical information can only be shared with an authorized health care proxy.
- The Soldiers' Home in Chelsea is reporting the recovery of residents based on clinical determinations following the retesting of all veterans, and 43 residents who had previously tested positive have been determined clinically recovered.
- The Home has eased restrictions for Dorm residents, who can now order food delivery from area restaurants, and drive in their personal vehicles off-site to medical appointments. The curfew has been extended, now from 11pm - 5am.
- The Soldiers' Home in Chelsea monitors the PPE supply, and continues to receive shipments of PPE including gloves, masks, eye protection, gowns, and shoe covers. 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 current status as of August 25 is as follows:**
 - Residents:
 - 0 veteran residents are positive
 - 149 veteran residents are negative
 - 43 residents have recovered, meaning they previously tested positive and are now clinically recovered
 - 0 residents have pending tests
 - Since March 1, there have been 31 deaths of veterans who tested positive
 - Employees:
 - 0 employees are positive
 - All employees who previously tested positive are now clinically recovered

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Resources

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.

COVID-19 Public Resources Map

MEMA, together with MA VOAD and other partners, has developed a [COVID-19 Public Resources Map](#) showing the location of resources available to the public, such as food banks, houses of worship, and Project Bread site locations. Please note that this map is not inclusive of all resources and is only as accurate as the information that has been provided to MEMA.

Massachusetts COVID-19 Response Dashboard

MEMA has developed and maintains a public-facing COVID-19 ArcGIS Online dashboard, available [here](#). This dashboard is continuously updated and captures information about current COVID 19 case counts, cases by age, cases by county, hospital status, hospital bed status, death tolls, and deaths by age. Users should refresh the dashboard on a daily basis as enhancements are continuously being added.

Stay Informed

- Get information from trusted sources. Visit <https://www.mass.gov/covid19> for the latest news, case counts, and lab testing results. Call 2-1-1 with questions. Text the keyword **COVIDMA** to **888-777** to receive notifications to your phone. To receive these notifications in Spanish, text **COVIDMAESP** to **888-777**
- Take care of your emotional health:
- 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

Infographics

- [Stop the Spread of Germs](#)
- Social distancing: for [youth](#) for [general audience](#)
- [Coping](#) with stress or fear
- What to do [if you are sick](#)
- 10 tips for at-home [quarantine or self-monitoring](#)

Short videos:

Overview of COVID-19 Testing	Importance of COVID-19 Testing	How to Safely Cover Your Face Outside of Home
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English • Spanish • Portuguese • Simplified Chinese • Traditional Chinese • Vietnamese • Haitian Creole 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English • Spanish • Portuguese • Simplified Chinese • Traditional Chinese • Vietnamese • Haitian Creole 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spanish • Portuguese • Simplified Chinese • Traditional Chinese • Haitian Creole • Vietnamese

- [10 Tips for at home quarantine or self-monitoring](#)
- [Stop the Spread of Germs like Seasonal Flu and COVID-19 \(:30\)](#)
- [Help Prevent COVID-19 with Social Distancing \(:30\)](#)
- [How Young People Can Help Prevent COVID-19 with Social Distancing \(:30\)](#)
- [Coping with Stress and Fear from COVID-19 \(:30\)](#)
- [Stay Home - Save Lives \(:06\)](#)

Spanish Radio Spots (available on request):

- “Prevent the Spread of Germs,” “Social Distancing and Stay Home,” and “Stay Safe. Save Lives.”

How to Help Out

- [Donate](#) to the Massachusetts COVID-19 Relief Fund.
- Volunteer opportunities for health professionals: [Please click here.](#)
- Health care facilities can learn more about [requesting personal protective equipment here.](#)

The Need for Blood Donations Continues, and Recovered COVID-19 Donors Can Help Save Lives

In coordination with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the Red Cross is seeking people who are fully recovered from the new coronavirus to sign up to donate plasma to help current COVID-19 patients. People who have fully recovered from COVID-19 have antibodies in their plasma that can attack the virus. This convalescent plasma is being evaluated as treatment for patients with serious or immediately life-threatening COVID-19 infections, or those judged by a healthcare provider to be at high risk of progression to severe or life-threatening condition. Interested individuals can visit RedCrossBlood.org/plasma4covid 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