

Thursday, January 21, 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, 1/28/21.*



During a visit to Gillette Stadium on Thursday, Governor Baker & Lt. Governor Polito greets a health care worker helping vaccinate first responders.

In This Week's Report:

- Latest Data: Public Health Update
- Week in Review: Key State Actions
 - Vaccine Access Expands to All Eligible Residents in Phase One
 - \$37 Million Awarded in Grants to 638 Businesses, Extends Capacity Limits and Lifts Early Closing Requirement for Businesses
 - COVID-19 Vaccine CDC Pharmacy Partnership
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 - Emerging Fraud Schemes Related to COVID-19 Vaccines
 - DPH, Emergency Management, and Disaster Recovery Updates
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Helpful Links:

- [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 1/21

462,910 Total Confirmed Cases ([click here for more information](#))

13,622 Deaths among confirmed cases

12,648,438 tests for the virus conducted to date by MA State Public Health Laboratory, hospitals, and commercial laboratories.

United States Last Updated 1/21

Case numbers are updated regularly at noon. Saturday/Sunday reports are preliminary and have not been confirmed with state/territorial health departments.

Total Cases Reported to CDC:

24,323,846 Total Cases

404,689 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.

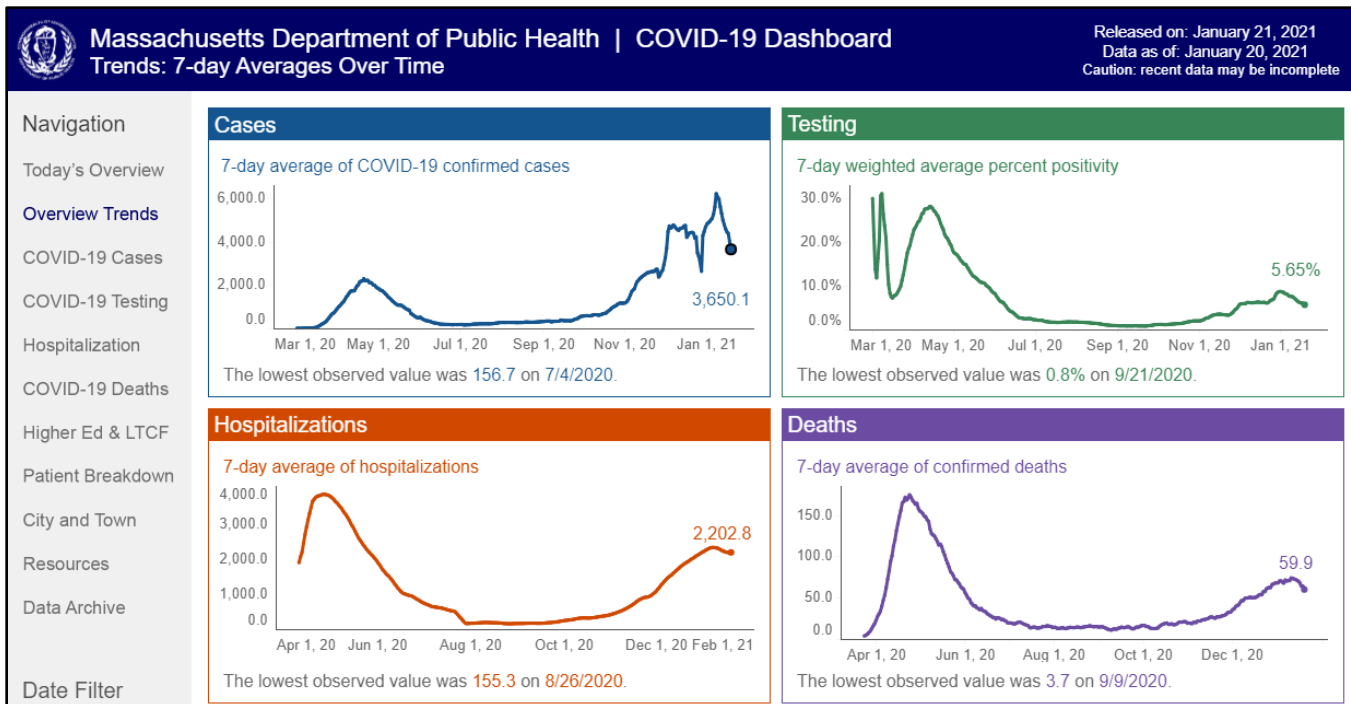
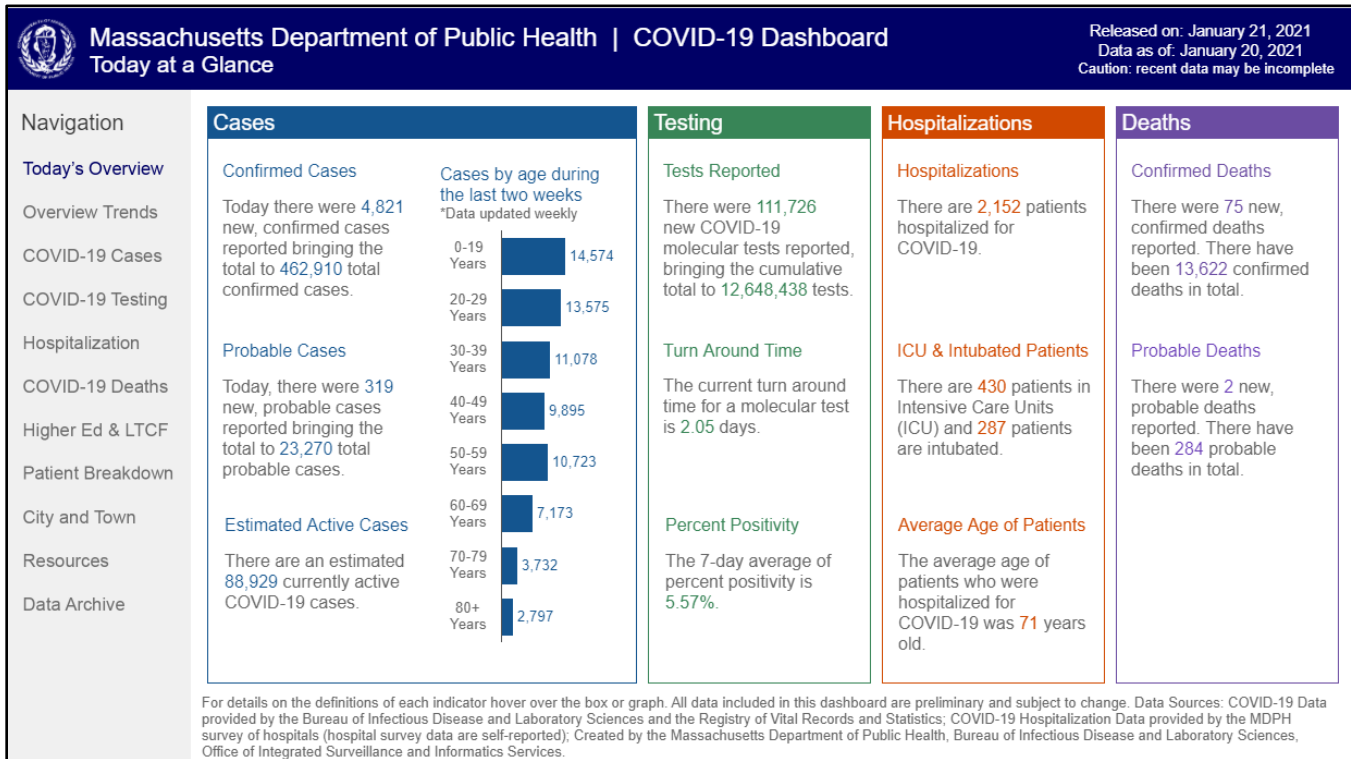
If you go out for essential needs:

- ✓ 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.

COVID-19 RESPONSE COMMAND CENTER
WEEKLY SITUATION REPORT

Latest Data: COVID-19 Public Health Update

Key indicators from today's interactive dashboard are below.



COVID-19 RESPONSE COMMAND CENTER

WEEKLY SITUATION REPORT

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, 1/21. The report 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

Vaccine Access Expands to All Eligible Residents in Phase One

Today, the Baker-Polito Administration announced that all residents in Phase One of the state vaccine distribution plan are eligible to receive a COVID-19 vaccine, effective immediately. Vaccinating the populations in Phase One now will preserve the Commonwealth's healthcare system, protect many of the most vulnerable residents; and ensure the vaccine is distributed equitably.

Eligible residents can now make appointments to receive vaccine at more than 150 locations across the state including first responder only sites, the newly opened mass vaccination site at Gillette Stadium, regional vaccination sites and participating CVS Health and Walgreens pharmacies. Additional mass vaccination sites, pharmacy sites, and community clinic sites will open in more locations on a rolling basis.



A full vaccination site map can be found [here](#). Residents are urged to check back often for additional vaccination locations.

Residents eligible for vaccine immediately under Phase One include:

- COVID-facing healthcare workers
- Long term care facilities (LTCF) residents and staff
- First Responders (EMS, Fire, Police)
- Congregate Care setting residents and staff (including corrections and shelters)
- Home-based healthcare workers
- Non-COVID-facing healthcare workers

Commonwealth's Self Attestation Form

All residents must demonstrate their eligibility to receive the vaccine. Eligibility can be established by self-attestation.

Most pharmacies such as CVS Health, require individuals to attest to their eligibility as part of the online appointment scheduling process.

All other sites will accept the Commonwealth's Self Attestation form, which can be filled out [online](#). Residents should be prepared to present this form in a hard copy or electronically at their appointment.

All residents should bring one of the following forms of identification to your appointment:

- Employer-issued ID card that includes your name and title; or

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- **Government-issued** identification or license; or
- Recent paystub.

\$37 Million Awarded in Grants to 638 Businesses, Extends Capacity Limits and Lifts Early Closing Requirement for Businesses

Today, the Baker-Polito Administration announced \$37.4 million in awards to 638 additional small businesses in a fourth round of grants through the COVID-19 Small Business Grant Program administered by the Massachusetts Growth Capital Corporation. Restaurants, bars and retail stores, which have been especially impacted during the pandemic, are among the key industries to lead this round.

The Administration announced an extension of the existing, across the board 25% capacity limits for most businesses and current limitations on gatherings through 5:00 AM on Monday, February 8th. The Administration also announced that effective Monday, January 25th at 5:00 AM, it would rescind an existing Early Closing order requiring many businesses to close at 9:30 PM each evening, and that at the same time it would also withdraw its related Stay At Home advisory urging residents to remain at home between the hours of 10:00 PM to 5:00 AM.

All other orders and safety guidance remain in place throughout the Commonwealth as the state continues to fight COVID-19 and vaccines ramp up in all regions.

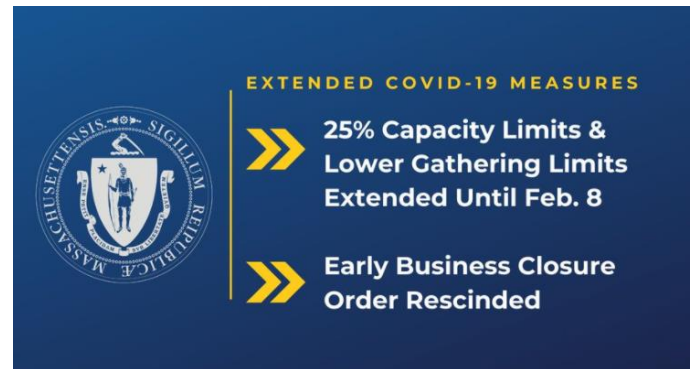
COVID-19 SMALL BUSINESS GRANT PROGRAM

To date, the Baker-Polito Administration has awarded more than \$232 million in direct financial support to 4,757 small businesses. This funding has been made available through a \$668 million business [relief fund](#) set up in December, as well as \$50.8 million for small and diverse businesses included in the [economic recovery package](#) announced in October.

Additional grants will be announced in the coming weeks for thousands of additional businesses.

On Monday, the Sector-Specific Small Business Relief Grant Program, a new program also administered by MGCC that targets industries experiencing the most significant economic hardship and a loss of revenue, closed for new applications. MGCC will continue to review applications to both programs in the coming weeks, and applicants will be able to review the status of their application through the application portal. Award notifications for the sector-specific program will be made in February.

STAY AT HOME ADVISORY:



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The DPH Stay at Home Advisory for the hours of 10:00 PM – 5:00 AM will be rescinded effective Monday, January 25th at 5:00 AM.

MANDATORY EARLY CLOSING ORDER:

The Mandatory Early Closing Order, which since early November has required certain businesses to close by 9:30 PM each night, will be rescinded effective Monday, January 25th at 5:00 AM.

Effective with the January 25 rescinding of the Order, the following businesses listed below may operate past 9:30 PM:

- Restaurants
- Arcades & Other Indoor & Outdoor Recreation (*Phase 3, Step 1 only*)
- Indoor and Outdoor Events
- Movie Theaters
- Outdoor Theaters
- Drive-In Movie Theaters
- Youth and Adult Amateur Sports Activities
- Golf Facilities
- Recreational Boating and Boating Businesses (e.g. charter boats)
- Outdoor Recreational Experiences (includes haunted houses)
- Casinos and Horse Tracks/Simulcast Facilities
- Driving and Flight Schools
- Zoos, Botanical Gardens, Wildlife Reserves, Nature Centers
- Close Contact Personal Services (e.g. hair and nail salons)
- Museums/Cultural & Historical Facilities/Guided Tours
- Gyms/Fitness Centers and Health Clubs
- Indoor and Outdoor Pools

Effective with the rescinding of the Early Closing Order, liquor stores and other retail establishments that sell alcohol will be permitted to sell alcohol past 9:30 PM; and adult use cannabis retailers will also be permitted to sell cannabis after 9:30 PM.

Gatherings and events will also be permitted to continue past 9:30 PM. All gatherings and events will remain subject to current capacity limits of 10 people indoors and 25 people outdoors.

Phase 3, Step 2 businesses must remain fully closed.

SECTOR-SPECIFIC CAPACITY RESTRICTIONS & GATHERING LIMITS

Capacity Limits: Under the current restrictions that are being extended today, most customer-facing businesses operating in Massachusetts remain subject to a 25% capacity limit.

For a list of sectors subject to the extended capacity restrictions, click [here](#).

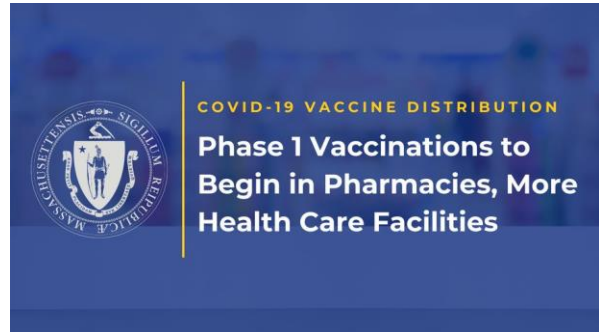
Gatherings Limit: The current gathering limits in place since December 26 are also being extended to Monday, February 8th. Indoor gatherings and events will remain limited to 10 people. Outdoor gatherings and events will

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remain limited to 25 people outside. The gatherings limit applies to private homes, event venues and public spaces.

COVID-19 Vaccine CDC Pharmacy Partnership - Phase 1, Expands Vaccine Locations & Names Fenway Park as Mass Vaccination Site

On Tuesday, the Baker-Polito Administration announced the expansion of more vaccine locations in each region of the Commonwealth at pharmacies, health care providers and a second mass vaccination site to boost the capacity to administer vaccines per week by the thousands. The Commonwealth will continue to add more vaccination sites throughout Massachusetts. Information on available sites will be available on a rolling basis [here](#).



First, the Administration announced that Massachusetts will become one of the first states in the nation to launch the COVID-19 CDC Pharmacy Partnership - Phase 1 with CVS Health and Walgreens pharmacies located throughout the Commonwealth. Starting this week, this program will deliver a total of 10,000 doses to at least 15 CVS Health and Walgreens pharmacies a week for eligible residents in the Phase One priority groups.

Second, the Administration announced that Fenway Park will become the state's second mass vaccination site, joining Gillette Stadium. The ballpark will open on February 1st to start administering up to 500 vaccines per day to eligible residents in the Phase One priority groups.

Next, the Administration also announced that UMass Amherst will expand their vaccination site to provide inoculations for eligible residents in Phase One priority groups. UMass Amherst has been providing vaccines to first responders and plans to now offer vaccines to all eligible residents in Phase One priority groups immediately.

Finally, to increase vaccine access for Phase 1 eligible priority groups, the Baker-Polito Administration is launching the Hospital Depot Initiative. This new program will facilitate access to COVID-19 vaccine for independent physician practices prioritized under Phase 1.

Current eligible groups under Phase 1 include: Clinical and non-clinical health care workers doing direct and COVID-facing care; Long term care facilities, rest homes and assisted living facilities; First responders (EMS, Fire, Police); and Congregate care settings (including corrections and shelters).

CDC Pharmacy Partnership - Phase 1

Massachusetts will be among the first states to activate retail pharmacy vaccination at scale through select CVS Health and Walgreens, which will start inoculating eligible residents in Phase One priority groups by appointment.

Starting this week, at least 15 CVS Health and Walgreens, located in areas of the state where there is currently less access to convenient vaccine sites, will receive a total of 10,000 vaccines to administer this week. The first 15 locations are located in **Greenfield, Fall River, Salem, South Yarmouth, Pittsfield, Lee, Holden, Gardner, Hyannis, Mashpee, Somerset, Fairhaven, Haverhill, Saugus, and Danvers**. Eligible residents in Phase One priority groups can view sites and book an appointment today by clicking [here](#).

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Approximately 40 vaccination sites will be added the week of 1/25 through current partners and collaboration with additional partners (Wegmans, Big Y, Price Chopper, Stop & Shop, Hannaford). Massachusetts expects to increase vaccine volume through retail pharmacies in the coming weeks. The Command Center will provide more details as pharmacy partners and sites come online.

Fenway Park Named as Second Mass Vaccination Site

Fenway Park will be the state's second mass vaccination site and will open on February 1st. Initially, the ballpark is scheduled to administer 500 vaccines per day by appointment and will ramp up to providing 1,000 vaccines per day soon to eligible residents in Phase One priority groups. CIC Health will operate the site, with Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, part of Beth Israel Lahey Health, as the medical director.

The site is expected to stay open through the beginning of baseball season in early April. The Command Center is also working with the City of Boston to identify and set up a longer-term vaccine site in Boston.

Last week, the Administration announced Gillette Stadium as the first mass vaccination site, which opened for eligible Phase One groups yesterday. This week, the site is expected to work up to administering over 1,000 vaccinations per day, and soon after, 5,000 vaccinations per day. Eligible residents in Phase 1 priority groups can book an appointment at Gillette Stadium by clicking [here](#). The Command Center is finalizing plans for several other mass vaccination sites.

UMass Vaccination Site Expansion

Beginning today, the University of Massachusetts at Amherst has expanded their role to administer COVID-19 vaccines, providing vaccinations for all eligible groups in Phase One of the state's distribution plan. This high capacity site will serve eligible groups in the Western Mass area. Appointments for the UMass Amherst vaccination site can be booked [here](#).

Hospital Depot Initiative

To increase vaccine access for residents in eligible Phase 1 priority groups, the Baker-Polito Administration is launching the Hospital Depot Initiative.

This new program will facilitate access to COVID-19 vaccines for independent COVID-facing physician practices prioritized under Phase 1. The Massachusetts COVID-19 Command Center and DPH, in collaboration with the Massachusetts Medical Society (MMS) and Mass General Brigham (MGB), is managing this initiative starting with COVID-facing health care workers.

Under this initiative, hospitals serving each region of the state have been identified as a depot to assist the Commonwealth with its vaccination distribution efforts. For clinical practices that are unable, due to their staff size and storage capacity, to receive larger, direct allocations of vaccine, a depot hospital will receive doses on their behalf and redistribute vaccine and all ancillary materials for office-based vaccination. In some cases, the hospital will provide direct vaccination to health care workers. The Massachusetts Medical Society is managing communications and coordination with physician practices.

DPH Announces First Cases of COVID-19 Variant Confirmed

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health announced this week the first two cases of the COVID-19 variant B.1.1.7 have been detected in Massachusetts. The confirmed cases announced this week were a Boston resident in her 20's, and a Worcester County resident in his 20's.

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Surveillance testing for the B.1.1.7 variant has been ongoing at the Massachusetts State Public Health Laboratory in collaboration with clinical diagnostic laboratories and academic partners. Surveillance consists of genomic sequencing on portions of COVID-19 positive specimens.

To date, the CDC has reported 88 cases from 14 states in the United States. Given the increased transmissibility of this variant and the number of states and other countries that have found infected cases, the Department expected the variant to arrive in Massachusetts eventually. The public health risk reduction measures remain the same. Individuals must continue to wear masks or face coverings while out in public, maintain 6-foot social distancing, stay home when you are sick, and get tested if you have symptoms or are identified as a close contact, and be vaccinated when vaccine is available for your priority group.

Emerging Fraud Schemes Related to COVID-19 Vaccines

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Department of Health and Human Services Office of Inspector General (HHS-OIG), and Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) are warning the public about several emerging fraud schemes related to COVID-19 vaccines.

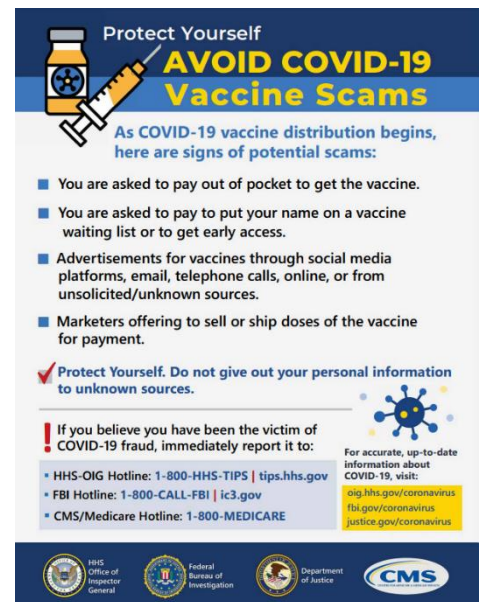
The FBI, HHS-OIG, and CMS have received complaints of scammers using the public's interest in COVID-19 vaccines to obtain personally identifiable information (PII) and money through various schemes. We continue to work diligently with law enforcement partners and the private sector to identify cyber threats and fraud in all forms.

The public should be aware of the following potential indicators of fraudulent activity:

- Advertisements or offers for early access to a vaccine upon payment of a deposit or fee
- Requests asking you to pay out of pocket to obtain the vaccine or to put your name on a COVID-19 vaccine waiting list
- Offers to undergo additional medical testing or procedures when obtaining a vaccine
- Marketers offering to sell and/or ship doses of a vaccine, domestically or internationally, in exchange for payment of a deposit or fee
- Unsolicited emails, telephone calls, or personal contact from someone claiming to be from a medical office, insurance company, or COVID-19 vaccine center requesting personal and/or medical information to determine recipients' eligibility to participate in clinical vaccine trials or obtain the vaccine
- Claims of FDA approval for a vaccine that cannot be verified
- Advertisements for vaccines through social media platforms, email, telephone calls, online, or from unsolicited/unknown sources
- Individuals contacting you in person, by phone, or by email to tell you the government or government officials require you to receive a COVID-19 vaccine

Tips to avoid COVID-19 vaccine-related fraud:

- Consult your state's health department website for up-to-date information about authorized vaccine distribution channels and only obtaining a vaccine through such channels.
- Check the FDA's website ([fda.gov](https://www.fda.gov)) for current information about vaccine emergency use authorizations.



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- Consult your primary care physician before undergoing any vaccination.
- Don't share your personal or health information with anyone other than known and trusted medical professionals.
- Check your medical bills and insurance explanation of benefits (EOBs) for any suspicious claims and promptly report any errors to your health insurance provider.
- Follow guidance and recommendations from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other trusted medical professionals.

Important Updates

Department of Public Health Updates:

- A new PSA focused on vaccine safety has been recorded with physicians in Springfield, the Southcoast and in Boston. The 30 second videos will launch February 7th with early clips to appear on social media. This was a project of the Governor's Office and MHA with assistance from DPH.
- The COVID-19 vaccine webpages have been updated to reflect the latest information on vaccine rollout and availability. Visit www.mass.gov/covidvaccine.
- The weekly public health report publishes on Thursdays at 5pm with city and town data. Look for it [here](#).
- The MA vaccine dashboard is among the most comprehensive in the country. It includes doses of vaccine shipped and administered; people vaccinated; distribution by county, age, race, ethnicity breakdowns. View the [vaccination dashboard](#) which also posts Thursdays at 5pm.
- DPH issued a Bulletin – What Massachusetts COVID-19 Vaccine Providers Need to Know, for the week of 1/18/21. This Bulletin offers the Latest Numbers, What to Know This Week, Who to Vaccinate This Week, Vaccine Ordering Process, Vaccine Receipt and Storage & Handling, Redistribution of COVID-19 Vaccine, Where to go when you have questions about COVID-19 vaccination, and Resources and Learning Opportunities.
- DPH removed the requirement for flu vaccination for attendance in childcare/preschool, primary, secondary and postsecondary education. Preliminary data show that this has been a mild flu season to date, presumably as people have received their seasonal flu vaccine and have been adhering to mask-wearing and social distancing due to COVID-19. DPH continues to strongly recommend that everyone age six months and older receive their seasonal flu vaccine each year.
- MA211 received 5,340 calls from Monday 1/11 through Sunday 1/17 for a new total of 193,882.
- DPH received Cycle 9 allocations on 1/19 as follows: Bamlanivimab 1920 doses and Regeneron 350 doses. This allocation is for a two-week period. The Therapeutics Working Group is recommending an equitable allocation strategy.
- There were 21 deliveries to health care entities on Monday (1/18) (2 PPE/4 testing supplies and 15 BinaxNOW kits); 9 deliveries were made on Tuesday (1/19) (8 BinaxNOW kits and 1 therapeutic); 37 deliveries were made on Wednesday (1/20) (4 PPE/3 testing supplies 29 BinaxNOW kits, 1 ventilator and 1 HFNC); 21 deliveries were made on Thursday (1/21) (1 PPE, 14 BinaxNOW kits and 1 therapeutic); and 8 deliveries have been scheduled for Friday (1/22) (3PPE/1 testing supplies and 4 BinaxNOW kits).
- As of 1/12/21, the Academic Public Health Volunteer Corps has 296 volunteers supporting 48 local boards of health. For more information about the Academic Public Health Volunteer Corps, please visit the [APHVC webpage](#) on Mass.gov.
- On Monday, January 18, vaccinations began at residential congregate care and shelter programs and correctional facilities within Phase 1 of the Commonwealth's COVID-19 distribution plan. In addition, residents and staff of public and private low income and affordable senior housing will now be included in step one of Phase Two of the vaccine distribution plan.

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- On Wednesday, January 20, DPH communicated that hospitals are now authorized to vaccinate all individuals in Phase 1 with vaccines on hand, including all paid hospital workers, including non-patient-facing workers. Hospitals may also now use existing *doses on hand* to vaccinate selected high-risk patients.
- All Health and Medical Coordinating Coalition (HMCC) regions are at Tier 4 status. In Tier 4, the hospitals in each region meet at least daily, and continue to collaborate across regions where necessary, to address growing capacity constraints and continue to load balance as needed.
- For the date range of 1/8/21 – 1/14/21, 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 14 Rapid Response Teams 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 also 10 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 increase. The [Lowell General Hospital Alternative Care Site](#) opened on 1/4/21, and 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 cities of Everett, Taunton, Pittsfield, and Wakefield continue to receive client placements: 229 individuals are currently housed in the program.
 - Top 5 referring cities:
 - Boston (271)
 - Springfield (147)
 - Worcester (145)
 - Cambridge (111)
 - Brockton (106)
 - To date, a total of 1,760 residents have been placed in these hotels for safe isolation and recovery, an increase of 155 since last week.

Community Food Box Program Update (1/15 to 1/21):

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).

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
4,820	200	1

Logistics (including Personal Protective Equipment and Supplies)

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- 118 orders were prepared for pickup/delivery from the MEMA State Logistics Warehouse from 1/15-1/21.
- The Warehouse continues to support isolation hotels in Pittsfield, Taunton, Wakefield, and Everett with weekly orders of PPE, drinks, snacks, and other supplies.
- Support to Stop the Spread Testing Sites continues, with a total of ten sites being supported. A total of 562,000 KN95 were distributed to these sites to support the initiative.

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:

MEMA COVID-19 EXECUTIVE DASHBOARD			
AGGREGATE PROGRAM VIEW			
<small>Note: Financial data represents 75% federal cost share; figures do not include MEMA management cost allowance</small>			
Overall (Best Available Estimate)	Submitted (Eligibility & Cost Review)	Approved* (by FEMA)	Paid (by MEMA)
\$652.5M -\$560.21K	\$467.8M +\$5.57M	\$290.6M +\$29.28K	\$7.3M \$0
883 Projects +24	603 Projects +19	82 Projects +2	37 Projects 0
Approved Applicants: 638			

- Online Applicant Technical Assistant Requests: 499
- Request for FEMA RPA Applicants: 670
- FEMA obligated six municipal PW's this week totaling \$1,357,569.45 (Federal Cost Share- \$1,018,177.09)
- MEMA has advanced three large projects to FEMA for Review: MassPort Maritime Operations (2 projects) and Boston Public Health Commission Testing Sites.
- MEMA is coordinating with FEMA to resolve outstanding Request for Public Assistance eligibility issues for 26 entities.

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COVID-19 Cases in Long-Term Care (LTC) Facilities (as of 1/21)	
Residents/Healthcare Workers of LTC Facilities	33,220
LTC Facilities Reporting at Least One Case of COVID-19	419
Deaths Reported in LTC Facilities	7,838



Holyoke Soldiers' Home Weekly Update (current as of 1/19/21)

- Over the past week, Veterans residing at Holyoke Medical Center since April 2020 have been returning to the Soldiers' Home in Holyoke in a project known as Operation Bring'em Home. The last transfer of residents from Holyoke Medical Center to the Soldiers' Home is tomorrow. The refresh project is an important initiative to ensure infection control standards are met throughout the Soldiers' Home in Holyoke.
- CVS Health is on site at the Soldiers' Home today, January 19, to administer the second dose of the vaccine and vaccinate those who were not vaccinated in the first round. On Tuesday, December 29, the first veteran residents and staff at the Soldiers' Home in Holyoke received the COVID-19 vaccination.
- The Home is strongly encouraging all staff to receive the vaccine. Staff are being provided with educational information about the COVID-19 vaccine, including COVID-19 vaccine FAQ sheets, and the Nurse Education Team and Medical Team held vaccine informational forums. The materials are available in both English and Spanish.
- The Soldiers' Home is working with Home Base, a veteran support organization, 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.
- The Soldiers' Home in Holyoke continues to prioritize virtual visitation and family communication as visitation and movement throughout the facility have been suspended, per infection control protocol, since November 20 for all units until further notice, and PPE protocols have been heightened. 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. Note: The Soldiers' Home can only share medical information about a resident with the authorized health care proxy on file.
- 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'



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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 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 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.
- 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 January 19 is as follows:
 - Status:
 - 0 veteran residents are positive and not clinically recovered
 - 3 veteran residents are negative
 - 57 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.
 - 64 veteran residents have been determined clinically recovered
 - 0 veteran residents have refused testing
- Resident locations:

COVID-19 RESPONSE COMMAND CENTER WEEKLY SITUATION REPORT

- 113 veteran residents are onsite
- 11 veteran residents are offsite
 - 4 veteran residents are at a dedicated skilled nursing unit at Holyoke Medical Center
 - 7 veteran residents are receiving acute care offsite
- Since March 1, there have been 77 veteran deaths of veteran residents who tested positive
- From the most recent round of staff surveillance testing
 - 1 tested positive
 - All others who previously tested positive are clinically recovered

Chelsea Soldiers' Home Weekly Update (current as of 1/19/21)

- CVS Health will be at the Soldiers' Home on January 19 and 20 to administer the second dose of the vaccine and will also provide vaccinations to those who were not vaccinated in the first round. On Tuesday, December 29, the first veteran residents and staff at the Soldiers' Home in Chelsea received the COVID-19 vaccination, and CVS Health returned to do additional staff vaccinations on Wednesday.
- The Soldiers' Home in Chelsea continues to prioritize virtual visitation, as visitation and movement throughout the facility remains suspended for all units until further notice per infection control protocol. 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. Visitation will resume after 14 consecutive days without a new positive test.
- Families can request updates on their loved ones by contacting their assigned social worker, or emailing the Home at CSH@mass.gov. They can schedule virtual visits by video or phone call. 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 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 January 19 is as follows:
 - Residents
 - 3 veteran residents are positive, all in independent living
 - 129 veteran residents are negative
 - 45 veteran residents have recovered, meaning they previously tested positive and are now clinically recovered
 - 0 veteran residents have pending tests
 - Since March 1, there have been 31 deaths of veteran residents who tested positive
 - Following the most recent round of staff surveillance testing:
 - 23 employees are positive
 - All other employees who previously tested positive have been determined clinically recovered

COVID-19 RESPONSE COMMAND CENTER WEEKLY SITUATION REPORT

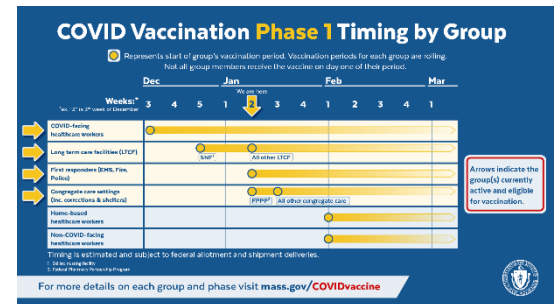
Communications Resources

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:

- **NEW:** [When can I get the COVID-19 vaccine?](#)
- **NEW:** [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](#)

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.

COVID-19 RESPONSE COMMAND CENTER

WEEKLY SITUATION REPORT

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.

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 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