

# **City of New Bedford provides update on COVID-19 vaccination efforts**

Ongoing vaccine supply shortages continue to impede the City of New Bedford's multi-pronged vaccination effort. Despite the challenge, last month, the City was able to begin vaccinating its 600+ first responders and nursing/health staff with the first dose of the Moderna vaccine. Administration of a second dose to first responders including EMS, Police, Fire, and nursing/health staff continues this month at the established vaccination clinic at the Andrea McCoy Recreation Center. More than 400 first responders and essential employees have received their first dose at McCoy, with nearly 200 receiving their second dose to date.

Massachusetts entered Phase 2 of its vaccination distribution plan on February 1. Under the current stage of Phase 2, all adults 75 years and older are eligible for vaccination. For its part, the City's Health Department has chosen to target the majority of its limited vaccine resources to the city's major senior housing facilities, including several high-rise complexes dedicated to seniors. Residents in these facilities are particularly vulnerable as the facilities often contain common areas with transmission potential and residents have high rates of medical conditions making them susceptible to the COVID-19 virus. Statistics show that just under 80% of the city's COVID-19 fatalities to date have been among those age 70 and over.

To date, the Health Department has administered 492 vaccines at senior living facilities. New Bedford has more than 20 senior housing complexes, and clinics are being scheduled with the management of each facility so that residents can be signed up automatically and vaccinated a designated time.

A separate federal program using private healthcare companies is vaccinating the city's nursing home residents.

In total the City's Health Department is currently receiving 400 vaccine doses per week, with an additional allocation for second doses. 300 of the 400 are distributed through the mobile vaccination clinics at senior apartments described above. The remaining 100 continue to be administered to first responders and nursing/health staff needing first or second doses, as well as a small number of eligible seniors age 75 or older who have inquired about vaccine availability with the city's Health Department, Community Services Department, or Council on Aging (COA).

New Bedford residents over the age of 75 are encouraged to contact their primary health care provider or doctor's office to schedule a vaccination appointment. Because of the short supply, the Council on Aging is only able to schedule a very limited amount of vaccinations. About 400 residents over 75 have been scheduled to be vaccinated over the course of the next month at the McCoy vaccination site, with more than 100 currently on a COA waiting list.

The City's Council on Aging continues to receive hundreds of calls inquiring about local vaccination opportunities. The COA staff are pleased to discuss vaccine options and receive contact information from eligible seniors who would be interested in obtaining a vaccine from a city-run clinic in the future. Residents are advised that city-run clinics are not currently listed on the state's regional vaccination site due to their very limited scale. It is hoped that, as the city obtains greater access to vaccine supplies, perhaps in the coming weeks, listings for city-run clinics will be posted on state and city websites.

In the interim, residents 75 and above may call the Council on Aging at 508-991-6250 but again are advised that the current wait time for scheduling a vaccine with the city-run clinics

is more than a month due to the supply shortage. Due to high call volume, residents are encouraged to call once; messages will be returned and residents will be placed on a waiting list in the order in which their calls are received.

Given the limitations on city-run clinics due to the supply shortage, residents 75 and above are encouraged, as a first step, to contact their primary health care provider or doctor's office, as local health systems are also beginning to vaccinate under Phase 2. Residents 75 and above may also sign up for non-city-run clinics through the state's regional vaccination sites, [mass.gov/covidvaccine](https://mass.gov/covidvaccine) or by dialing 211 by telephone.

A new state-run site was recently announced by the state for Greater New Bedford, located at the former Circuit City store on State Road (Route 6) in Dartmouth, and appointments can be made for that site beginning February 18 on the state sign-up website.

The City will continue to provide new information as its vaccine access increases and opportunities for vaccination through city-run clinics is expanded. Residents should monitor local media outlets and the City's social media accounts for these developments.

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## **Massachusetts Environmental Police lieutenant receives Service Member Patriot award**

Congratulations to Massachusetts Environmental Police Lieutenant Robert Akin on being awarded the Service Member

Patriot Award.

This award is presented by the Office of the Secretary of Defense in recognition of a supervisor's efforts in support of citizen soldiers.

Lt. Akin was nominated for this award by a currently deployed Massachusetts Environmental Police Officer. Lt. Akin is pictured here with the Officer's family.



*Massachusetts Environmental Police photo.*

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# CDC: Double-Masking, Tighter

# Fit More Effective

Chris Lisinski

State House News Service

Wearing a second cloth mask on top of a medical face mask or knotting a medical mask's ear loops can offer significant additional protection against COVID-19, according to research the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention published Wednesday.

Wearing a medical mask without knotting the loops blocked 42 percent of the particles from a simulated cough, the CDC found, while a cloth mask alone blocked 44.3 percent. But combining the two with a medical mask on the bottom and a cloth mask on top – often referred to as “double-masking” – blocked 92.5 percent of cough particles because it provided a more snug fit on an individual's head.

“The data in this report underscore the finding that good fit can increase overall mask efficiency,” researchers wrote. “Multiple simple ways to improve fit have been demonstrated to be effective. Continued innovative efforts to improve the fit of cloth and medical procedure masks to enhance their performance merit attention.”

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## Massachusetts man arrested for 6th OUI, resisting arrest

# after fleeing crash

Shortly after 11 p.m. on Sunday Trooper Tara Poor was dispatched to reports of a road rage incident on Route 95 southbound in the area of Exit 54 in Reading. It was reported that the vehicle, an Acura sedan, was being operated erratically traveling southbound behind a group of plow trucks actively clearing the roadway after Sunday's snow storm. The Acura crashed into another vehicle multiple times then fled the scene after the plow trucks exited at Exit 53. Trooper Poor located the Acura traveling approximately 85 miles per hour as she approached Exit 50. She then observed the Acura to crash into the center median guardrail and come to rest in a snowbank. Trooper Poor approached the Acura and confirmed the operator, identified as DAVID PECK, 57, of York, Maine, was uninjured. While doing so she observed numerous signs of impairment suspected to be caused by alcohol intoxication. Several other cruisers then arrived on scene to assist.

Troopers suspected PECK was too intoxicated to operate his vehicle and asked him to step out, however, he restarted the ignition and attempted to leave the scene. Troopers were able to turn the ignition off and take control of PECK, escorting him out of the driver's seat. After removing him from the vehicle PECK continued to physically resist. Due to the extremely unsafe road conditions, combined with other vehicle traffic passing by while in the left travel lane of Route 95, Troopers cooperated and were able to place PECK in custody and in the rear of a cruiser. Troopers learned on scene that PECK's driver's license was suspended due to multiple prior charges of Operating Under the Influence of Alcohol. After an inventory of his vehicle Troopers located open containers of alcohol in the passenger compartment.

He was eventually transported to State Police-Newbury for booking. A bail commissioner was contacted and set bail at \$2,000. He was scheduled for arraignment at Salem District

Court on the following charges:

- OUI – Liquor, 6th Offense;
  - Resisting Arrest;
  - Leaving the Scene of a Property Damage Crash;
  - Reckless Operation of a Motor Vehicle;
  - Operating a Motor Vehicle with a Suspended License;
  - Possession of an Open Container of Alcohol in a Motor Vehicle;
  - Marked Lanes Violation; and
  - Speeding
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## **New Bedford Police Department charges juvenile with firearm offenses**

On February 9, NBPD Gang Detectives seized a loaded 380 caliber handgun from a juvenile with known gang ties while patrolling in the area of Roosevelt St.

The juvenile had recently posted gun-centric photos online. The handgun was located during a subsequent encounter.

The serial numbers on the gun had been obliterated. The juvenile was charged with illegal possession of a firearm with a defaced serial number.

Detective Samuel Algarin-Mojica investigated the case.

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# Trusted companions to seniors will gain vaccine access in Massachusetts

By Matt Murphy

State House News Service

In an effort to make the COVID-19 vaccine more accessible to residents 75 and older, the Baker administration plans to begin this week allowing anyone who accompanies an eligible senior to one of the state's mass vaccination sites to receive a shot themselves.

Health and Human Services Secretary Marylou Sudders said the new accommodation for trusted family, friends, neighbors or caregivers to get vaccinated along with vulnerable seniors came after consultation with councils on aging and other advocated for older adults.

While all the mass vaccination sites are handicap accessible, sites like Gillette Stadium or Fenway Park can be unfamiliar and intimidating to some, and allowing trusted companions to also get vaccinated is an effort to encourage more seniors to seek the inoculation.

Massachusetts currently has four mass vaccination sites open at Gillette Stadium, Fenway Park, the Eastfield Mall in Springfield and the DoubleTree Hotel in Danvers. The Reggie Lewis Center in Roxbury is open to Boston residents and being operated by the city, but will soon transition to a mass vaccination site run by the state.

Sudders said that Gov. Charlie Baker on Wednesday will also announce new mass vaccination sites planned for the Natick Mall and the former Circuit City in Dartmouth.



The Natick site will partner with LabCorp to begin administering 500 shots a day on Feb. 22, ramping up to as many as 3,000 doses a day. The Dartmouth location will open two days later on Feb. 24 in partnership with Curtative. The site will also have the capacity to handle 500 patients a day to start, and eventually will be able to administer 2,000 shots a day, depending on supply.

Appointments for the new sites will go online beginning Feb. 18.

With Massachusetts now receiving about 108,000 doses of Pfizer and Moderna vaccine a week from the federal government, Sudders said the state will post 100,000 appointments this week, including 74,000 new appointments that will be added online on Thursday.

Thirty new new retail pharmacy sites are opening at CVS and Walgreens locations around the state, and Sudders said 30,000 of the new appointments will be at pharmacies.

Baker, Lt. Gov. Karyn Polito and Sudders planned to tour the mass vaccination site at the DoubleTree Hotel in Danvers on Wednesday morning at 11 a.m.

Earlier in the week, Baker said the mass vaccination sites were "batting about 100 percent in terms of vaccine allocated and vaccine administered, and they'll continue to operate at that level."

There are roughly 496,000 resident over the age of 75 in Massachusetts, including those living in long-term care facilities. Baker said Monday that roughly 200,000 in that age bracket had been vaccinated so far.

The Department of Public Health reported Tuesday that of the 1,283,700 vaccine doses shipped to Massachusetts so far, 910,412 doses had been administered, or about 70.9 percent.

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# **Governor Baker announces two mass COVID-19 vaccination sites**

Today, 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](https://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](https://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.

Tomorrow morning (Thursday, Feb. 11), 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](https://mass.gov/covidvaccine) for details on how to book.

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](https://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.

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# **Wareham Police charge woman for vandalizing property and assault with an axe**

Friday, February 5: Wareham police responded to an address on Cromesett Road at 2:23 p.m. for a report of a female brandishing an axe and attempting to hit a person with it. While responding, officers were updated that the female had left the scene in an auto. The vehicle was spotted by Officer Jennifer Braley in the area of Marion Road and Gibbs Avenue. She stopped the vehicle, assisted by Lt. Walter Correia and Officer Zina Kelsch.

Sgt. Paul Somers responded to the original call location and determined that the female suspect had allegedly caused damage to the house and a vehicle parked in the driveway.

In addition, she reportedly punched a male in the face before arming herself with the axe. The victim stated that the female lifted the axe in the air and tried to strike him. The male was able to grab the axe, and the female suspect fled the area. This was not a random incident as the victim and suspect are known to each other.

Charlene Marino (53), of Wareham, was arrested and charged with two counts of vandalizing property, assault with a dangerous weapon, and assault and battery.

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# **New Bedford property revitalized by City, PACE YouthBuild sold to first-time homebuyer through lottery**

A formerly vacant and distressed single-family home in New Bedford's west end was sold to a first-time homebuyer through a lottery process.

The once dilapidated property has been completely revitalized by students participating in the YouthBuild New Bedford Program and funded through the City's Office of Housing and Community Development.

The renovated home was sold at a below-market sales price of \$215,000 to ensure that an income-eligible first-time homebuyer could qualify for the purchase, and a deed rider is recorded to ensure long-term compliance with the program.

PACE Community Housing Corporation purchased the vacant, single-family property and utilized financing available through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's HOME Investment Partnership Program, and the City's Office of Housing and Community Development provided funding to PACE to completely renovate the property.

Pam Kuechler, Executive Director of PACE, said, "This project has provided the opportunity for 54 young people from PACE YouthBuild to learn a variety of skills they can utilize in the professional world while creating a beautiful, affordable home for a great young family. We are thrilled to partner with the City of New Bedford to be able to create these opportunities."

The mission of the YouthBuild Program is to build skillsets

and mindsets that lead to lifelong learning, livelihood, and leadership. The program works with students ages 16 to 24 who earn their GED and participate in working on a job site learning a trade while working on affordable housing in their community. The primary goal of the Office of Housing and Community Development's Neighborhoods First Initiative is to provide affordable homeownership opportunities to first-time homebuyers while restoring vacant and derelict properties that devalue neighborhoods.

The project involved the complete renovation of this four-bedroom home that includes over 1,600 square feet of living space. The completed home includes new siding, new roofing, energy-efficient windows, a heating system, and a fully renovated kitchen with new appliances.

Local lenders of the Fall River/ New Bedford Housing Partnership coordinated the lottery and pre-approval process for the project. In addition to underwriting potential loan applicants, the local lenders are providing the new homeowners with very advantageous financing through MassHousing's Buy New Bedford Mortgage Program. With Buy New Bedford, the new homeowners are receiving a reduced fixed-rate first mortgage from Bristol County Savings Bank, a participating Lender of the Housing Partnership. The Buy New Bedford program allows borrowers to qualify for a mortgage using flexible underwriting guidelines, as well as having lower down payment requirements.

Patrick J. Sullivan, Director of the Office of Housing and Community Development said, "We are proud of this successful program that creates affordable homeownership opportunities, works with YouthBuild students who are able to learn skills to enter the workforce, fixes a dilapidated home in our neighborhoods and puts a home back on the tax roll. We congratulate all of our partners who helped make this happen."

For more information about First Time Home Buyer programs,

contact the City of New Bedford Office of Housing and Community Development at 508-979-1500 or visit [www.newbedford-ma.gov](http://www.newbedford-ma.gov).

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## **Repeat New Bedford drug offender charged with Fentanyl trafficking while on parole**

On February 8, New Bedford Police Department Narcotics Detectives executed a search warrant at 56 Ashley St., Apt. #3S. As a result, approximately 39 grams of fentanyl and more than \$1,000 in cash was seized.

51-year old Edwin Cabezuedo of 56 Ashley St., Apt. #3S was arrested and charged with trafficking fentanyl. Cabezuedo has numerous previous convictions for drug distribution. He was last convicted in 2018. Edwin is currently on parole and was released from custody in July of 2020. Detective Nathaniel Almeida was the lead investigator on this case.

New Bedford Narcotics Detectives continue to work tirelessly against the scourge of illicit opiate distribution and the negative impact it has on our community.

If you have any information on criminal activity in your neighborhood, the New Bedford Police Dept. wants to hear from you. You can leave an anonymous tip on our voicemail at (508) 991-6300 Ext. 1.