

# Memorial Day weekend events planned to remember New Bedford veterans

Several events are planned in New Bedford throughout the upcoming Memorial Day weekend to honor the courageous men and women who lost their lives serving the United States.

Events are returning to traditional in-person formats for the first time since 2019. Memorial services and wreath-layings were broadcast online in 2020 and 2021, in lieu of parades and large-scale events, due to COVID-19.

This weekend's events include:

## **Saturday, May 28**

*9 a.m. at Rural Cemetery*

The Greater New Bedford Civil War Round Table will conduct a memorial exercise at the Union Soldier's Burial Site at Rural Cemetery, 149 Dartmouth St. These services typically include historical reenactments, music, and a gun salute.

## **Sunday, May 29**

*10:30 a.m. at Pine Grove Cemetery*

New Bedford Post 1, The American Legion will conduct a Memorial Day Exercise at the Veterans' plot in Pine Grove Cemetery, 1100 Ashley Boulevard.

*12 p.m. at New Bedford City Hall*

New Bedford Post 1, The American Legion will conduct a Memorial Day Exercise at the Vietnam Veterans' Honor Roll at New Bedford City Hall (133 William Street) on the William Street side of the building.

## **Monday, May 30 (Memorial Day)**

*8:15 a.m. at Rural Cemetery*

New Bedford Post 1, The American Legion will conduct a Memorial Day Exercise at the Veterans' Plot in Rural Cemetery, 149 Dartmouth Street.

*10 a.m. at Pier 3*

The New Bedford Port Society's Annual Memorial Day Fishermen's Service, Pier 3, New Bedford Waterfront.

*11:30 a.m. City of New Bedford Memorial Day Parade*

This year's parade is put on by the City of New Bedford, the City's Veterans' Services Department, New Bedford City Council and the New Bedford Veterans' Advisory Board.

The parade will form at the intersection of Hathaway Blvd. and Parker Street beginning around 10:30 a.m., and stepping off at 11:30 a.m.

The parade will march east on Parker Street to County Street. The parade will then turn left and head North on County Street. The parade will then turn right to head east on Pope Street, where it will take its final right turn into Clasky Common Park.

There will be a Memorial Day service held at the reviewing stand at the conclusion of the parade and we encourage all participants to stay and take part in the service. This year's service will include the reading of the Gettysburg Address, Logan's Orders and roll call of New Bedford's Veterans who have passed away. We invite family and friends of Veterans who have passed away to bring a flower to the service and place it at the Soldiers and Sailors Monument in remembrance.

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# **Boston Police Department launch investigation after woman stabbed to death in Mattapan**

*"Death Investigation in the Area of Rosewood Street in Mattapan."*

At about 9:40 PM, on Tuesday, May 10, 2022, officers assigned to District E-18 (Hyde Park), responded to a call for a person stabbed in the area of Rosewood Street in Mattapan.

Upon arrival, officers observed an adult female suffering from apparent stab wounds. The female victim was pronounced on scene.

The Boston Police Department is actively reviewing the facts and circumstances surrounding this incident and is asking anyone with information relative to this investigation to contact Boston Police Homicide Detectives at (617) 343-4470.

Community members wishing to assist this investigation anonymously can do so by calling the CrimeStoppers Tip Line at 1 (800) 494-TIPS or by texting the word 'TIP' to CRIME (27463). The Boston Police Department will stringently guard and protect the identities of all those who wish to assist this investigation in an anonymous manner.

To those who find themselves in need of emotional support or simply needing to talk to someone about distressing events in our community, the Boston Neighborhood Trauma Team (NTT) provides free, private support 24/7 at (617) 431-0125 or by

visiting [BPHC.org/trauma](https://BPHC.org/trauma).” -Boston Police Department.

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## **Massachusetts State Police Trooper runs into supporters while fueling up in New Bedford**

“Massachusetts State Police Trooper Ryan Boswell was getting fuel in New Bedford the other day when he happened to make short conversation with a young girl and her father.

Sydney, the young girl, is a big fan and supporter of the Massachusetts State Police and asked to take a photo sitting in his cruiser. Trooper Boswell was happy to do so and let Sydney sit inside to get a picture.

It’s moments like these that remind us just how inspiring the work our members do is.” -State Police Association of Massachusetts.

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## **Massachusetts invests \$73M in UMass Dartmouth learning**

# facilities

*Commonwealth funding to continue the modernization of campus classrooms and laboratories.*

Dartmouth, Ma. – May 6, 2022 – UMass Dartmouth announced \$43M in new funding from the Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance (DCAMM) to continue upgrades planned to the campus's main academic facilities, the Liberal Arts Building (LARTS). In addition to the recently awarded \$30M, this funding will enhance classrooms, labs, office spaces, and student meeting spaces within the Liberal Arts Building and Campus Center Building that houses the auditorium and other instructional spaces.

"Our Administration's capital plan invests in critical initiatives across the state and we are particularly pleased to provide significant support for improvements on the UMass Dartmouth campus," said Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito. "With these investments at UMass Dartmouth and others across the Commonwealth, this capital plan will make Massachusetts a better place to live, learn and work."

"This historic \$73 million investment in UMass Dartmouth and our students—the single largest investment in our history—will enable us to provide the learning spaces our students need to pursue their ambitions," said UMass Dartmouth Chancellor Mark A. Fuller. "I am so appreciative of the Baker-Polito Administration's continued support and recognition of our efforts to transform students' lives on the SouthCoast and across Massachusetts."

The project will address upgrades and deferred maintenance needs in the campus's most trafficked building, which contains classrooms that support many programs in STEM fields, the humanities, social sciences, and student support centers. Renovations include changes to make the HVAC system more

sustainable, upgrades to learning spaces and address electrical systems, window replacements, and building envelope improvements. The funding will also address deferred maintenance issues within the MacLean Campus Center and Main Auditorium.

[Click here](#) to learn more about the initial \$30M in state funding to UMass Dartmouth.

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## **32-year old New Bedford man sentenced for firearm and cocaine offenses**

“A New Bedford man was sentenced today in federal court in Boston for illegally possessing a firearm and selling cocaine.

Khyron Thompson, 32, was sentenced by U.S. District Court Judge Denise J. Casper to 57 months in prison and three years of supervised release. On Dec. 13, 2021, Thompson pleaded guilty to one count of being a felon in possession of firearm and ammunition and one count of distribution of and possession with intent to distribute cocaine.

On Feb. 13, 2020, Thompson distributed cocaine and possessed a loaded .32 caliber Hi-Point pistol firearm with an obliterated serial number and six rounds of ammunition. Thompson is prohibited from possessing a firearm due to multiple previous state convictions including assault and battery.

United States Attorney Rachael S. Rollins; James Ferguson, Special Agent in Charge of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms & Explosives, Boston Field Division; and New Bedford

Police Chief Joseph C. Cordeiro made the announcement. Assistant U.S. Attorneys Evan Gotlob and Kenneth G. Shine of Rollins' Major Crimes Unit prosecuted the case.

This case is part of Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN), the centerpiece of the Department of Justice's violent crime reduction efforts. PSN is an evidence-based program proven to be effective at reducing violent crime. Through PSN, a broad spectrum of stakeholders work together to identify the most pressing violent crime problems in the community and develop comprehensive solutions to address them. As part of this strategy, PSN focuses enforcement efforts on the most violent offenders and partners with locally based prevention and reentry programs for lasting reductions in crime. "-  
Massachusetts Department of Justice.

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## **Former Massachusetts DUA employee sentenced to prison for COVID-19 fraud scheme**

*"Defendant committed crimes shortly after release from federal prison on unrelated charges.*

A former employee of the Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance (DUA) was sentenced yesterday for conspiring to misuse her position in an effort to obtain Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) funds through fraudulent claims, including claims using identities she stole.

Tiffany Pacheco, a/k/a Tiffany Tavery, 36, formerly of New Bedford, was sentenced by U.S. District Court Judge Indira

Talwani to 42 months in prison and three years of supervised release. The defendant was also ordered to pay restitution in the amount of \$199,555 and forfeiture of \$17,181. On Aug. 30, 2021, she pleaded guilty to six counts of wire fraud, one count of conspiracy to commit wire fraud and one count of aggravated identity theft.

Tiffany Pacheco was hired by the DUA in April 2020, shortly after her release from federal prison following a conviction for aggravated identity theft. While employed by DUA, Tiffany Pacheco abused her position and access to the PUA claim system to submit fraudulent claims using stolen identity information and to submit fraudulent PUA claim information on behalf of herself and her husband, Arthur Pacheco, who was incarcerated in Texas until Sept. 4, 2020, and thus ineligible for PUA funds. Tiffany Pacheco also induced a friend to continue her scheme after she was caught, charged and detained.

“Ms. Pacheco violated the public’s trust by egregiously abusing her position as a DUA employee to perpetrate a fraud scheme that stole personal information from innocent victims and stole money from hardworking taxpayers,” said United States Attorney Rachael S. Rollins. “COVID-related assistance is intended to help hardworking American workers most affected by the pandemic. To take from these funds is to take from those experiencing legitimate hardship and genuine need. Adding insult to injury, Ms. Pacheco’s job at DUA presented an opportunity for new beginnings following her previous felony conviction. However, she ruined that opportunity by engaging in criminal behavior and refusing to change. Now she will be held responsible.”

“Pacheco abused her privileged access to the personal information of Massachusetts residents seeking unemployment assistance. She stole identities and manipulated records in the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance computer system in a scheme to enrich herself and her husband without regard for the lives of those whose identities were impacted or for the



funds that should have gone to those in legitimate need,” said Matthew Millhollin, Special Agent in Charge for the Homeland Security Investigations’ New England Field Office.

“Tiffany Pacheco, while employed at the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Department of Unemployment Assistance (DUA), engaged in a scheme to defraud the Department of Unemployment Assistance by applying for and receiving Pandemic Unemployment Assistance that she was not entitled to, using her own identity, her husband’s identity, and at least two stolen identities she accessed through DUA records. Pacheco abused her position at DUA by taking action on claims, including her husband’s claim, to secure just under \$200,000 in stolen benefits. The Office of Inspector General remains committed to protecting the integrity of the unemployment insurance program, particularly against those who attempt to use their positions of trust to enrich themselves at the expense of taxpayers,” said Special Agent-in-Charge Jonathan Mellone, U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General.

Tiffany Pacheco abused her employment-related access to DUA’s online PUA claim system to submit and make changes to claims for five individuals. For two of these claims, she used personal identifying information (PII) obtained by virtue of her job at DUA, while other claims used PII that she had obtained independently. Tiffany Pacheco also used her access to the PUA claim system to make unauthorized eligibility determinations to prompt the payment of benefits and to increase the amount of payments. The total loss associated with the fraudulent claims Tiffany Pacheco submitted using stolen PII is \$159,922.

In June 2020, PUA claims submitted for Tiffany Pacheco and her husband reflected 2019 income of \$0 and no dependents. In July 2020, via her employment with DUA, Tiffany Pacheco obtained access to the PUA computer system, and later changed claim information for herself and Arthur Pacheco in order to increase the amount of PUA funds they would receive. For

example, Tiffany Pacheco increased the amount of 2019 income for her and Arthur Pacheco to more than \$240,000 and increased the number of their dependents to seven. Tiffany Pacheco further used her access to the PUA system to verify the increased 2019 income on both claims without the required income verification documents.

In November 2020, Arthur Pacheco called DUA and falsely denied that he had been incarcerated during the timeframe leading up to September 2020, and that he was only incarcerated for approximately one month. Tiffany Pacheco also spoke with DUA and misrepresented the period of time in which Arthur Pacheco had been incarcerated.

Additionally, Tiffany Pacheco instructed Donna Wasson – a friend who resided in Texas – to use the DUA customer portal to access PUA claims for two of the fraudulent claims Tiffany Pacheco had submitted using stolen PII. Tiffany Pacheco further instructed Wasson to pose as a claimant and directed Wasson to a Google Drive account that contained the images of driver's licenses and other documents under certain stolen identities. As a result, Wasson accessed unemployment claims under multiple stolen identities to fraudulently obtain benefits to which she was not entitled.

In September 2020, a search of the New Bedford apartment where Tiffany and Arthur Pacheco resided uncovered various tools of identity fraud, including an ID laminator, 100 blank ID cards, 68 hologram overlays, 150 card lamination sheets and 649 sheets of blank checks. Law enforcement also seized approximately \$17,000 cash and a notebook that contained the personal identifying information of various individuals. In addition, a driver's license recovered during the search matched the name of a victim Tiffany Pacheco used to submit another fraudulent PUA claim. On Sept. 23, 2020, DUA terminated Tiffany Pacheco's employment.

On Nov. 18, 2021, Arthur Pacheco was sentenced by Judge

Talwani to one year in prison and three years of supervised release. Arthur Pacheco was also ordered to pay restitution and forfeiture in the amount of \$7,491. On March 8, 2022, Wasson was sentenced by U.S. District Court Chief Judge F. Dennis Saylor IV to 18 months in prison and two years of supervised release. Wasson was also ordered to pay restitution and forfeiture in the amount of \$5,437.

U.S. Attorney Rollins, HSI SAC Millhollin and DOL OIG SAC Mellone made the announcement today. The New Bedford Police Department, Massachusetts Parole Board and Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance, Program Integrity Unit provided valuable assistance with the investigation. Assistant U.S. Attorney William Abely, Chief of Rollins' Criminal Division and Assistant U.S. Attorney Dustin Chao, Chief of Rollins' Public Corruption and Special Prosecutions Unit, prosecuted the case. The investigation was conducted by Homeland Security's Investigation's Document and Benefit Fraud Task Force (DBFTF), a specialized field investigative group comprised of personnel from various local, state, and federal agencies with expertise in detecting, deterring, and disrupting organizations and individuals involved in various types of document, identity, and benefit fraud schemes.

On May 17, 2021, the Attorney General established the COVID-19 Fraud Enforcement Task Force to marshal the resources of the Department of Justice in partnership with agencies across government to enhance efforts to combat and prevent pandemic-related fraud. The Task Force bolsters efforts to investigate and prosecute the most culpable domestic and international criminal actors and assists agencies tasked with administering relief programs to prevent fraud by, among other methods, augmenting and incorporating existing coordination mechanisms, identifying resources and techniques to uncover fraudulent actors and their schemes, and sharing and harnessing information and insights gained from prior enforcement efforts. For more information on the Department's response to

the pandemic, please visit  
<https://www.justice.gov/coronavirus>.

Anyone with information about allegations of attempted fraud involving COVID-19 can report it by calling the Department of Justice's National Center for Disaster Fraud (NCDF) Hotline at 866-720-5721 or via the NCDF Web Complaint Form at: <https://www.justice.gov/disaster-fraud/ncdf-disaster-complaint-form>." -Massachusetts Department of Justice.

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## **New Bedford's Mayor Mitchell focuses on growth and opportunity in State of the City address**

In a forward-looking State of the City address to a sold-out crowd today, Mayor Jon Mitchell focused on growth and opportunity taking shape as New Bedford emerges from the pandemic.

Speaking to more than 500 attendees at New Bedford High School, Mayor Mitchell's address – delivered in-person for the first time in 2019 – covered a broad range of existing projects and new priorities that will energize the City for years to come.

"We've succeeded because we made the conscious decision to seize responsibility for our own economic competitiveness, we have planned comprehensively, and we execute our plans relentlessly," Mayor Mitchell said. "The essence of our strategy...has been all about capitalizing on our strengths,

whether it's in the arts and culture sector, health care, hospitality, or manufacturing. ...We double down on what we're good at, we help to cultivate the small businesses that grow organically here, and we support our anchor institutions."

Mayor Mitchell cited the "beehive of economic activity" coming to the City's working waterfront, where hundreds of millions of dollars across numerous public and private projects will vastly expand the Port of New Bedford's industrial capacity and resources for commercial fishing, offshore wind, and a wave of growing maritime industries.

"Our goal, simply stated, is to establish New Bedford as the top blue economy on the East Coast," Mayor Mitchell said.

Announcements in the address also included a 25-percent increase in road construction funds in this year's capital budget—part of long-term infrastructure planning that Mayor Mitchell noted has not always been a priority in New Bedford.

"The city didn't have a capital plan when I got into office, but the one we've developed and executed has enabled us to more than double spending on road maintenance and building upgrades, which have included extensive energy efficiency retrofits," Mayor Mitchell said. "We are committed to increasing this funding further still."

He also addressed the rising costs of healthcare for more than the City's more than 1,100 employees, pledging to resubmit a proposal this budget season to adopt a state law that would give the city greater control over rising healthcare costs. Nearly every city and town in southeastern Massachusetts has adopted the law, but New Bedford's City Council has twice failed to move it forward.

"I urge councilors to give this proposal a thorough airing this time, so that everyone can understand that we can get better control over the long-term costs of healthcare without

compromising the quality of coverage our employees enjoy,” Mayor Mitchell said.

Mayor Mitchell also announced major investments using American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to activate the development of vacant or underutilized commercial properties, as part of a continuing effort to ease the burden on taxpayers by broadening the City’s tax base.

“I am announcing today that we are setting aside \$5 million in funding from the American Rescue Plan Act to accelerate the development of vacant commercial properties that need just a little more funding to be redeveloped,” Mayor Mitchell said. “By helping these projects over the proverbial hump, we can help the city pay its bills.”

The most boisterous of several applause breaks in the speech came in response to an announcement related to the iconic Zeiterion Performing Arts Center, known as “the Z,” which is about to undertake its most comprehensive renovation and expansion in 40 years.

“So that the Z can continue to thrive and contribute to the life of the city for the next 40 years, I am announcing today that we will invest \$5 million in ARPA funds into the Z’s effort. As cities must reinvest in their anchor institutions, this opportunity frankly is a no-brainer,” Mayor Mitchell said.

He also spoke about the city’s physical beauty, and implored residents to continue involving themselves in the betterment of their community.

“A city is more than a place on a map. It shapes our relationships with one another, and is woven into our individual identity. It is part of who we are – past, present and future. When you devote your talent and energy to make your city a better place, you’ve committed to improving yourself.”

Read the full text of Mayor Mitchell's 2022 State of the City Address on the City of New Bedford website.

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## **25-year old New Bedford man sentenced to prison in connection to 2017 murder case**

"A 25-year-old man was sentenced to life in prison last Friday after being convicted earlier this month of Second Degree Murder and other charges connected to the October 2017 New Bedford killing of Angel Camacho, Bristol County District Attorney Thomas M. Quinn III announced.

David Antonetty Almestica was sentenced by Judge Gregg Pasquale to serve life in prison with the possibility of parole after 18 years. The defendant was convicted by a jury of his peers after a two-week long trial in Fall River Superior Court of Second Degree Murder, Witness Intimidation and two counts of Assault and Battery with a Dangerous Weapon.

On October 4, 2017, at approximately 6:30 in the morning, the defendant and the victim met up in the second-floor apartment of 45 Tallman Street, New Bedford in order for the defendant to sell cocaine to the victim. The victim was not happy with the price and expressed his displeasure. The defendant then stabbed the victim three times, once in the chest, once in the leg, and a slash wound to his abdomen. The stab wound to the chest pierced the victim's heart, causing his chest cavity to fill with blood.

The defendant then threw the victim down the stairs to the first-floor landing. The defendant followed the victim outside of the building to a street corner, where he had collapsed, and proceeded to strike him with a blunt object and kick him with a shod foot. One of the witnesses described the kick as a “football kick” that was occurred in front of parents putting their kids on the school bus.

The defendant then handed out cocaine to the witnesses to the stabbing and told them to shut their mouths, and that they didn’t see anything. The defendant fled New Bedford to Springfield, MA where he was arrested that evening by members of the Hampden County State Police Detective Unit & Springfield Police after a warrant was obtained for the defendant’s arrest by our office.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant District Attorneys Michael Cahillane and Gillian Kirsch.

“I am pleased the jury held the defendant accountable for this senseless murder over a dispute about drugs. It is particularly concerning that after stabbing the victim, the defendant chased him down the street. While the victim was bleeding to death, the defendant kicked him and beat him with a pipe in front of the public,” District Attorney Quinn said.”

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## **Upcoming City of New Bedford free COVID-19 vaccine clinics**

Free, walk-up COVID-19 clinics in New Bedford offer first- and second-dose vaccines, CDC-approved booster shots, and pediatric vaccines and boosters for teens 12-17. Bringing your vaccination card when getting a booster is helpful, but not



required. Clinics are provided by Seven Hills Behavioral Health, unless otherwise marked.

**NOTE:** Local vaccine clinics will not be held on Saturday, April 16, and Monday, April 18, due to Easter Weekend and the Patriots Day holiday.

Visit [vaxnb.com](http://vaxnb.com) for updated schedules of local COVID-19 vaccination and testing locations. Upcoming vaccine locations in New Bedford include:

**Friday, April 15:**

PAACA (360 Coggeshall St.) – 1 p.m. to 5 p.m., Pfizer, Moderna, J&J, boosters, w/ pediatric vaccines for children 5 – 11 years old & boosters for teens 12-17

**Wednesday, April 20:**

- Community Economic Development Center (1501 Acushnet Ave.) – 3 p.m. to 7 p.m., Pfizer, Moderna, all vaccines and boosters for those 5+; walk-ins welcome

**Friday, April 22:**

- PAACA (360 Coggeshall St.) – 1 p.m. to 5 p.m., Pfizer, Moderna, J&J, boosters, w/ pediatric vaccines for children 5 – 11 years old & boosters for teens 12-17

- WonderBowl (66 Hathaway Road) – 4 p.m. to 8 p.m., provider Purple Shield Medical, Pfizer vaccines and boosters for ages 5 and up, all youth 5 – 18 years old who receive a vaccine or booster dose will get a free hour of bowling; anyone who receives a vaccine will get a \$25 gift card

**Saturday, April 23:**

- Andrea McCoy Recreation Center (181 Hillman St.) – 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., Pfizer, Moderna, J&J, boosters, vaccines for children 5 – 11, boosters for teens 12-17

- Buttonwood Park Zoo (425 Hawthorn St.) – 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Pfizer vaccines and boosters for ages 5 and up, all youth 5 – 18 years old who receive a vaccine or booster dose will get free admission for themselves and an adult; anyone who receives a vaccine will get a \$25 gift card

- WonderBowl (66 Hathaway Road) – 4 p.m. to 8 p.m., provider Purple Shield Medical, Pfizer vaccines and boosters for ages 5 and up, all youth 5 – 18 years old who receive a vaccine or booster dose will get a free hour of bowling; anyone who receives a vaccine will get a \$25 gift card

### **Sunday, April 24:**

- Buttonwood Park Zoo (425 Hawthorn St.) – 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Pfizer vaccines and boosters for ages 5 and up, all youth 5 – 18 years old who receive a vaccine or booster dose will get free admission for themselves and an adult; anyone who receives a vaccine will get a \$25 gift card

### **Monday, April 25:**

- Former Fire Station 11 (754 Brock Ave.) – 3 p.m. to 7 p.m., Pfizer, Moderna, J&J, boosters, vaccines for children 5 – 11, boosters for teens 12-17

### **Wednesday, April 27:**

- Community Economic Development Center (1501 Acushnet Ave.) – 3 p.m. to 7 p.m., Pfizer, Moderna, all vaccines and boosters for those 5+; walk-ins welcome

### **Friday, April 29:**

- PAACA (360 Coggeshall St.) – 1 p.m. to 5 p.m., Pfizer, Moderna, J&J, boosters, w/ pediatric vaccines for children 5 – 11 years old & boosters for teens 12-17

### **Saturday, April 30:**

- Andrea McCoy Recreation Center (181 Hillman St.) – 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., Pfizer, Moderna, J&J, boosters, vaccines for children 5 – 11, boosters for teens 12-17

### **Reminder on the importance of vaccinations:**

- Vaccination levels in the region remain low, and daily case rates remain high. Getting vaccinated for COVID-19 is not only about protecting yourself – it's also about protecting your family, friends, and community. Vaccination is critically important to consider ahead of large gatherings, which can lead to super-spreader events, clusters, hospitalizations, and severe illness among people who are unvaccinated.

### **State Resources for Vaccine Records, Locations**

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health has free online services to find your personal vaccine records and local vaccination locations, including many pharmacies.

Access your vaccine records at <https://myvaxrecords.mass.gov/>, and find local listings at <https://vaxfinder.mass.gov/>.

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# **Massachusetts man arrested for allegedly sex trafficking a 15-year old girl**

"A Canton was arrested yesterday in connection with sex trafficking a minor.

Keion Rowell, 23, was indicted on one count of sex trafficking of a child and one count of conspiracy to commit sex trafficking of a minor. Following an initial appearance in

federal court in Boston today before U.S. District Court Magistrate Judge Marianne B. Bowler, Rowell was detained pending an arraignment and detention hearing scheduled for April 19, 2022.

“We believe that this defendant preyed on, groomed, and advertised a vulnerable 15-year-old girl, a child, for commercial sex – profiting off his exploitation,” said United States Attorney Rachael S. Rollins. “This case is an unfortunate reminder that sex trafficking knows no limits. It can reach any community and target victims of all ages. My office and our law enforcement partners remain diligent in our efforts to prevent the targeted exploitation and harming of our most vulnerable.”

“The facts alleged in this case are gut-wrenching. No person, let alone a child, should ever be treated as a commodity, and sold for sex, but Keion Rowell is accused of doing exactly that,” said Joseph R. Bonavolonta, Special Agent in Charge of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Boston Division. “Child sex traffickers often prey upon our community’s most vulnerable minors – runaways, foster kids, children who face difficult circumstances – promising their young victims that they will receive care and support when that couldn’t be further from the truth. Their sole focus is on exploiting them for their own personal gain which is why FBI Boston’s Child Exploitation – Human Trafficking Task Force will continue to do everything it can to ensure children recovered from this kind of exploitation receive the services they need to move forward with their lives, and their traffickers are brought to justice.”

According to the indictment, on Jan. 28, 2021, agents recovered a 15-year-old girl who had been reported missing approximately 10 to 14 days previously after she left her home in a suburb of Boston. It is alleged that the victim’s phone contained nude and revealing photos of the victim, online advertisements for commercial sex that included pictures of

the victim, as well as Venmo and Cash App accounts registered to Rowell. Rowell allegedly opened an online "Meet Me" account for the victim that advertised commercial sex with the victim and instructed the victim on how much she should charge. It is further alleged that the Rowell required the victim to engage in commercial sex acts multiple times and took the proceeds.

Members of the public who believe they may be a victim of this alleged crime should contact [USAMA.VictimAssistance@usdoj.gov](mailto:USAMA.VictimAssistance@usdoj.gov).

The charge of sex trafficking of a child provides for a mandatory minimum sentence of 10 years and up to life in prison, five years of supervised release and a fine of \$250,000. The charge of conspiracy to commit sex trafficking of a child provides for a sentence of up to life in prison, five years of supervised release and a fine of \$250,000. Sentences are imposed by a federal district court judge based upon the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and statutes which govern the determination of a sentence in a criminal case.

U.S. Attorney Rollins and FBI SAC Bonavolonta made the announcement today. Valuable assistance was provided by the Boston and Randolph Police Departments and the Massachusetts State Police. Assistant U.S. Attorney Evan Gotlob of Rollins' Civil Rights Enforcement Team is prosecuting the case.

The details contained in the indictment are allegations. The defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law." -Massachusetts Department of Justice.