

Walmart launches “Neighbors Helping Neighbors” program to help customers get groceries delivered during COVID-19 pandemic

Walmart and Nextdoor announced today the launch of their “Neighbors Helping Neighbors” program, an effort to make it easier for neighbors across the country to help one another during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Through this new program, a first for both companies, Nextdoor members in cities across the country can now request assistance – or offer to help someone in their community – with shopping for their essential items at Walmart. This support network makes it easier for vulnerable community members to coordinate the pickup and delivery of their groceries, medications and other essentials with a neighbor who is already planning a shopping trip to their local Walmart store – completely contact-free.

The new “Neighbors Helping Neighbors” initiative follows recent moves by Walmart to make other shopping services, like checking out with Walmart Pay and its curbside pickup and delivery services, contact-free.

“I’ve seen firsthand the countless ways our Walmart team is working together during this challenging time, leading with humanity, compassion and understanding to serve our customers,” said Janey Whiteside, Walmart’s chief customer officer. “We’re continuing to do that through our new program with Nextdoor. We’re connecting neighbors to each other so that more members of our communities have access to essential

items, while limiting contact and the number of people shopping in our stores.”

If a Nextdoor member wants help shopping for needed items or wants to offer their help to do so, it’s as easy as visiting Nextdoor.com or logging on to the Nextdoor app, which is available on both iOS and Android phones. From there, members click on the “Groups” tab and will see Walmart stores in their area pinned to the top of the page. Members will then be prompted to share a message in the group feed where they can indicate if they need help or want to help. Once members connect in the feed they can work out details of the shopping trip on the message board or direct message each other to work on the specifics. Neighbors are encouraged to utilize contact-free payment options and delivery methods.

“We’re inspired every day by the kindness of people around the world who are stepping up and helping out. In recent weeks, we’ve been blown away by the number of members who have raised their hands to run an errand, go to the grocery store or pick up a prescription for a neighbor,” said Sarah Friar, Nextdoor CEO. “We’re grateful for Walmart’s partnership to make this important connection between neighbors around vital services, and we’re proud to come together to ensure everyone has a neighborhood to rely on.”

The “Neighbors Helping Neighbors” program builds on Nextdoor’s recently launched “Groups” feature which enables members to organize around a shared interest or project. Over the last few weeks, Nextdoor has seen a 7x increase in people joining groups to help one another – from checking in with the elderly and vulnerable to running errands for those who simply need a helping hand.

Walmart store locations and hours where “Neighbors Helping Neighbors” is available can be found on Nextdoor’s “Help Map.”

Dartmouth House of Corrections staff member tests positive for COVID-19; zero prisoners test positive

A Bristol County Sheriff's Office corrections officer has tested positive for COVID-19.

According to a BCSO spokesperson, the corrections officer left work after becoming ill in the early morning hours of Sunday, April 19, during a third-shift assignment in a control room at the Bristol County House of Corrections in Dartmouth. He received a COVID-19 test later on April 19 and was notified of a positive test on Monday, April 20.

"There have been almost 2,000 confirmed cases of the virus in Bristol County overall," Sheriff Thomas M. Hodgson said Thursday morning. "We feel very fortunate that every staff member who has tested positive at the Sheriff's Office has either made a full recovery and returned to duty or is feeling okay and expected back soon."

The officer is the sixth Bristol County staff member to test positive for COVID-19. A nurse, K9 officer and a corrections officer have fully recovered and returned to duty. A mental health professional and two corrections officers, including this most recent one, are expected to make full recoveries and return to duty soon.

Currently, no one incarcerated in a Bristol County corrections facility has tested positive for the virus. Eight symptomatic prisoners have tested negative.

Over the past month, the Bristol County Sheriff's Office has instituted many protocols to protect inmates, detainees and staff from the Coronavirus outbreak. Some of those measures include:

- All employees were given masks that must be worn inside the secure perimeter of our facilities. All inmates and detainees have also been given masks to wear for protection.
- All areas of the facility are being cleaned\disinfected every day on every shift.
- All staff members are being screened before entering the buildings; new arriving inmates are being screened before being accepted into custody.
- In-person visitation has been suspended to limit the number of people coming in and out.

"The support we've received from the community has been outstanding and it means a lot to our health care professionals, food services team, corrections officers and every other essential worker here who keeps our operation running around the clock," Sheriff Hodgson said. "The next few weeks are expected to be rough, so I can't stress enough to the people of Bristol County the importance of staying home if possible and practicing strict hygiene protocols. We'll get through this together."

**Massachusetts conducts 14,614
COVID-19 cases – nearly**

double previous high

Massachusetts Coronavirus Update

On April 23, the Massachusetts Public Health Department reported that the state added 3,079 more positive cases of COVID-19 bringing to total to 46,023. This is an increase from Wednesday's 1,745 reported cases. 178 new COVID-19 related deaths were reported since yesterday, down from 221, bringing the total deaths in Massachusetts to 2,360.



As of 4 pm today, 195,076 people in Massachusetts have been tested for COVID-19 – 14,614 new tests since yesterday. The previous high was 8,750 new tests on April 16.



Southcoast Health's \$14 million, state of the art intensive care unit at St. Luke's is slated to open soon. Full details **here**.

Massachusetts labor officials reported another wave of surging new unemployment claims Thursday, bringing the total in Massachusetts over the past five weeks to more than 650,000, largely ex-workers whose employers are in forced shutdowns. Full details **here**.

New Bedford Coronavirus Update

Mayor Jon Mitchell's office reported 13 additional confirmed COVID-19 cases in New Bedford Thursday morning, bringing the total positive cases in the city to 352, **up from 339 on Wednesday**. New Bedford added two more COVID-19 related death on Thursday bringing the total to 12. No specific details (age, sex of the patient, etc) are available.

Sadly, Teresa Maria Raposo Cordeiro, New Bedford Police Chief

Joeseeph Cordeiro's mom, passed away on Saturday to COVID-19. She was 84 years old. Full details [here](#).

New Bedford's Zeiterion stage will be dark through August 2. Full details [here](#).

While New Bedford's **Cape Verdean Recognition Parade** and **Memorial Day parade** have been canceled, and **Fall River's Day of Portugal has been postponed**, the **2020 Feast of the Blessed Sacrament** in New Bedford is still moving forward as planned. This year's festival is scheduled for July 30-31 and August 1-2. Full details [here](#).

New Bedford's 2020 Memorial Day parade, scheduled for Monday, May 25, has been canceled due to social distancing measures in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Full details [here](#).

Fall River Coronavirus Update

Fall River reported 47 more confirmed positive cases of COVID-19. According to Mayor Coogan's Office, Fall River has seen 314 total positive cases. 141 cases have cleared isolation. Full details [here](#).

New Bedford's St. Luke's ICU opens ahead of schedule as part of COVID response

Southcoast Health's \$14 million, state of the art intensive care unit at St. Luke's was slated to open soon – just not quite this soon.

But the not-for-profit health system opted to accelerate the

project's completion as part of its preparation for and response to the COVID-19 pandemic's potential impact in the region, Southcoast officials said this week during a "virtual ribbon cutting" featuring physically distanced administrative and clinical leaders. The timeline was moved up by as much as a month in anticipation of a projected surge, they said.

At 16,000 square feet, the new ICU, built on the fourth floor of St. Luke's, more than doubles the size of the previous unit, which itself will remain in operation to handle increased patient volume related to the coronavirus. At a later date to be determined, the space will be repurposed for medical/surgical patients.

"The fact that this investment in our community could be up and running at such a crucial time is a remarkable achievement on the part of our staff and a testament to the trades and small businesses who stayed on the job to see the project through ahead of schedule," said Keith Hovan, President and CEO of Southcoast Health. "Amid so much uncertainty right now, these frontline health care heroes and amazing essential workers are a source of confidence who inspire enduring gratitude and hope."

Hovan also thanked the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the local legislative delegation, and the City of New Bedford for working closely with Southcoast throughout the process.

The new ICU will add 16 beds in 440-square-foot rooms to the hospital's capacity. Other features include an advanced video system for monitoring and safe patient-nurse communication, transitional screening windows for privacy, and images of the region created by local artists to promote a calming, healing environment.

"This new ICU is important for our trauma and critical care patients and staff," said Maria Tassoni, RN, Nurse Manager. "It's more modern, more spacious, and more accessible. We're

thankful to everyone who has worked on this project. It's been a group effort, and all involved have been tremendous."

Officials said the new ICU also aligns with Southcoast Health's process to establish St. Luke's as a Level II Trauma Center, meaning patients along the 195 corridor can receive critical care without necessarily needing transport to Providence or Boston during the moments that matter most.

"The Level II Trauma Center required a state of the art medical ICU with enhanced surgical capability, and that's what we have here now to provide our patients with the best possible care," said Dr. Michael Barretti, Medical Director for the new ICU.

"The technology and comfort, along with the negative pressure rooms for airborne precautions and upgrades in safety and monitoring features, make this an incredible opportunity and honor for me and our entire staff."

New Bedford reports two more COVID-19 related deaths, 13 new cases since Wednesday

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New Bedford's 2020 Memorial Day parade, scheduled for Monday, May 25, has been canceled due to social distancing measures in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Full details **here**.

Fall River reported 78 more confirmed positive cases of COVID-19 on Wednesday. According to Mayor Coogan, the City of Fall River has seen 267 total positive cases. Full details **here**.

On April 22, the Massachusetts Public Health Department reported that the state added 1,745 more positive cases of COVID-19 bringing to total to 41,199. This is an increase from Tuesday's 1,556 reported cases and is the first increase after five days of decreases. 221 new COVID-19 related deaths were reported since yesterday, up from 152, bringing the total deaths in Massachusetts to 2,182. 221 is the highest single-day death total in Massachusetts yet, topping 161 deaths on April 15. Full details **here**.

Federal approval announced to assist national school lunch program participants

The Baker-Polito Administration announced that it received federal approval to promote increased food security for families who participate in the United States Department of Agriculture's National School Lunch Program (NSLP) through an initiative called Pandemic EBT, or P-EBT. As of October 2019, more than 500,000 students receive free or reduced-price meals through the NSLP. Families receiving P-EBT will get a payment equal \$5.70 per student per day of school closure through this new initiative, bringing more than \$200 million in federal dollars to the state.

"DTA has been pursuing all available tools and resources to support individuals and families impacted by this public health crisis. In light of school closures, the approval of this collaborative initiative adds another critical tool to the state's effort to leverage federal funds, promote food security, and provide additional food assistance to students and their families. This initiative will also bring close to \$200 million into the Commonwealth's economy, supporting our local grocery stores, corner stores, and their employees," said Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) Commissioner Amy Kershaw.

"I'm happy to be working across agencies to get these additional benefits to eligible students' families," Elementary and Secondary Education Commissioner Jeffrey C. Riley said. "This will supplement the great work that districts and other organizations are already doing to provide grab-and-go meals to students, and I know that many families' needs have increased as a result of the pandemic."

P-EBT is administered by DTA and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). Funds through the program will be issued in the coming weeks, beginning with households with active Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) cases. Nearly half of the households who will receive assistance are SNAP recipients. DTA and DESE are working with local school districts to provide P-EBT benefits to families who would have received free or reduced-priced meals. More information on when and how benefits will be issued will be shared soon.

The Administration is partnering with Project Bread and the Shah Family Foundation to share information and resources with households who will be receiving P-EBT. Information about P-EBT can be found at: [Mass.gov/p-ebt](https://mass.gov/p-ebt). The Shah Foundation will be setting up a P-EBT page with additional information. For questions about P-EBT or other food access resources, call Project Bread's FoodSource hotline at (800) 645-8333.

"We know we need big solutions to solve a crisis of this size. P-EBT is a great example and we applaud our leaders here in Massachusetts and DTA for taking action so more than 500,000 kids can buy food that will help keep them healthy during the crisis," said Erin McAleer, President of Project Bread

"We are proud to partner with Governor Baker and his administration to support families in accessing healthy food for their children during this challenging time. Every child deserves daily nutritious meals – whether school is in session or not – and we know now more than ever that this is critical to building strong, resilient communities.," said Jill Shah, President of the Shah Family Foundation said.

Since the beginning of this public health crisis, the weekly average number of SNAP applications received has increased by nearly 400%. The Administration remains committed to supporting food security and nutrition for Massachusetts residents. P-EBT builds on DTA and DESE's ongoing efforts to promote food security for families and children who have been

impacted by COVID-19, including:

- Setting up more than 1,500 grab and go meal sites at schools across the Commonwealth
- Issuing emergency SNAP benefits to more than 240,000 households to bring all SNAP recipients to their maximum benefit amount, bringing more than \$40 million into the state
- Streamlining SNAP application processes and extending certification periods
- Pursuing the opportunity to enable SNAP recipients to make online EBT food purchases

DTA assists and empowers low-income individuals and families to meet their basic needs, improve their quality of life, and achieve long term economic self-sufficiency. DTA serves one in nine residents of the Commonwealth with direct economic assistance and food assistance, as well as workforce training opportunities. Learn more: <https://www.mass.gov/DTA/COVID-19>

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education is committed to preparing all students for success after high school. The Department's work includes licensing educators, distributing state and federal education money, helping districts implement learning standards, overseeing statewide standardized tests, monitoring schools and districts, and convening districts and individuals to share best practices. In addition, we collect data to inform state and local decisions. Learn more: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/>.

The Shah Family Foundation supports innovative and transformative work in education, healthcare and the community. We believe that interesting and lasting solutions sit where these intersect. Our primary work and support is centered in Boston, with the goal of sharing broadly the programs and innovations that prove successful in our home town. Learn more at: <https://www.shahfoundation.org/>.

Project Bread is committed to preventing and ending hunger in

Massachusetts. We provide access to food for people who are hungry today while working to break the cycle of hunger through advocacy, education, and community action. Learn more at: ProjectBread.org/

MA Lawmakers urge Trump to fully fund COVID-19 response for Massachusetts Tribal Nations

United States Senators Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) and Edward J. Markey (D-MA), along with Representatives William Keating (D-MA-09), Stephen F. Lynch (D-MA-08), Katherine Clark (D-MA-05), Lori Trahan (D-MA-03), Joseph P. Kennedy III (D-MA-04), James P. McGovern (D-MA-02), Richard E. Neal (D-MA-01), Seth Moulton (D-MA-06), and Ayanna Pressley (D-MA-07) sent a letter to President Trump requesting that he direct the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to waive the traditional cost-share requirements for all COVID-19-related assistance for the Commonwealth's two federally recognized tribal nations, the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah) and the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe.

The lawmakers' letter comes after President Trump declared COVID-19-related emergencies for both tribal nations and follows a similar request for the Commonwealth made by the Massachusetts lawmakers last week.

"The response to the pandemic is unlike anything the Commonwealth or our nation has experienced in modern times, and the need for additional resources to combat this crisis

grows with each passing day,” the lawmakers wrote. “These needs are also felt acutely by the two federally recognized tribal nations in Massachusetts, which are being stretched extremely thin in order to provide crucial services to their citizens.”

In early April, leaders from both tribal nations wrote to President Trump to request waivers from any cost share and to request that FEMA increase its federal cost share from 75% to 100%, citing the financial hardship caused by the pandemic. Unlike states, the two tribal nations do not have a tax base to help cover the cost of services to their citizens and as a result, they have not been able to implement fully all the emergency measures they would have been able to take if they did not bear a significant share of the cost. In addition, the federal government’s trust and treaty obligations require that tribal nations not be left to suffer severe hardship from an emergency.

“The federal government ought to provide COVID-19-related assistance while allowing for the tribal nations to endure as little hardship as possible,” the lawmakers continued. “Granting the requests of the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah) and the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe, and waiving the traditional cost share requirements for all COVID-19-related assistance to them, will better empower them to address this pandemic.”

2020.04.22 Letter to President re. FEMA cost share for Massachusetts tribes

Senator Warren has been very active in working to ensure Indian Country has the resources it needs and is owed to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. She introduced the Tribal Medical Supplies Stockpile Access Act (S. 3514), legislation that would guarantee that the Indian Health Service, tribal health authorities, and urban Indian organizations have access to the Strategic National Stockpile, a federal repository of

drugs and medical supplies that can be tapped if a public health emergency could exhaust local supplies. Senator Warren cosponsored Senator Udall's CDC Tribal Public Health Security and Preparedness Act (S. 3486), which would enable tribal nations and tribal organizations to apply directly to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for Public Health Emergency Preparedness program funds. She joined Senator Udall's letter to Vice President Mike Pence, head of the White House Task Force on Coronavirus, urging him to engage meaningfully with tribal leaders and Native communities. Senator Warren also joined colleagues in urging President Trump to ensure that COVID-19 relief is implemented in a way that upholds the federal trust and treaty responsibilities, respects tribal sovereignty, and provides for meaningful government-to-government consultation with tribal nations.

New Massachusetts jobless claims in coronavirus pandemic now exceed 650,000

Chris Lisinski
Stat House News Service

Massachusetts labor officials reported another wave of surging new unemployment claims Thursday, bringing the total in Massachusetts over the past five weeks to more than 650,000, largely ex-workers whose employers are in forced shutdowns.

Between April 12 and April 18, 4.4 million more Americans and 80,345 more Massachusetts residents filed initial unemployment claims, according to data released Thursday by the U.S. Department of Labor. Both new figures were the lowest

increases since late March, but still several times higher than any pre-pandemic record.

Weekly initial claims in Massachusetts during the coronavirus era peaked at 181,423 between March 22 and March 28. New Massachusetts claims over the past five weeks alone represent more than 17 percent of the state's labor force. Before the COVID-19 outbreak struck and prompted officials to close schools and non-essential businesses as a public health protection, the unemployment rate in Massachusetts was about 2.9 percent. Nationwide, nearly 26.5 million Americans have filed for jobless aid since March 15.

13,480 of 22,952 people no longer quarantined in Massachusetts

"More than 13,000 people in Massachusetts have completed official quarantine periods and are no longer being monitored for symptoms, the Department of Public Health reported Wednesday.

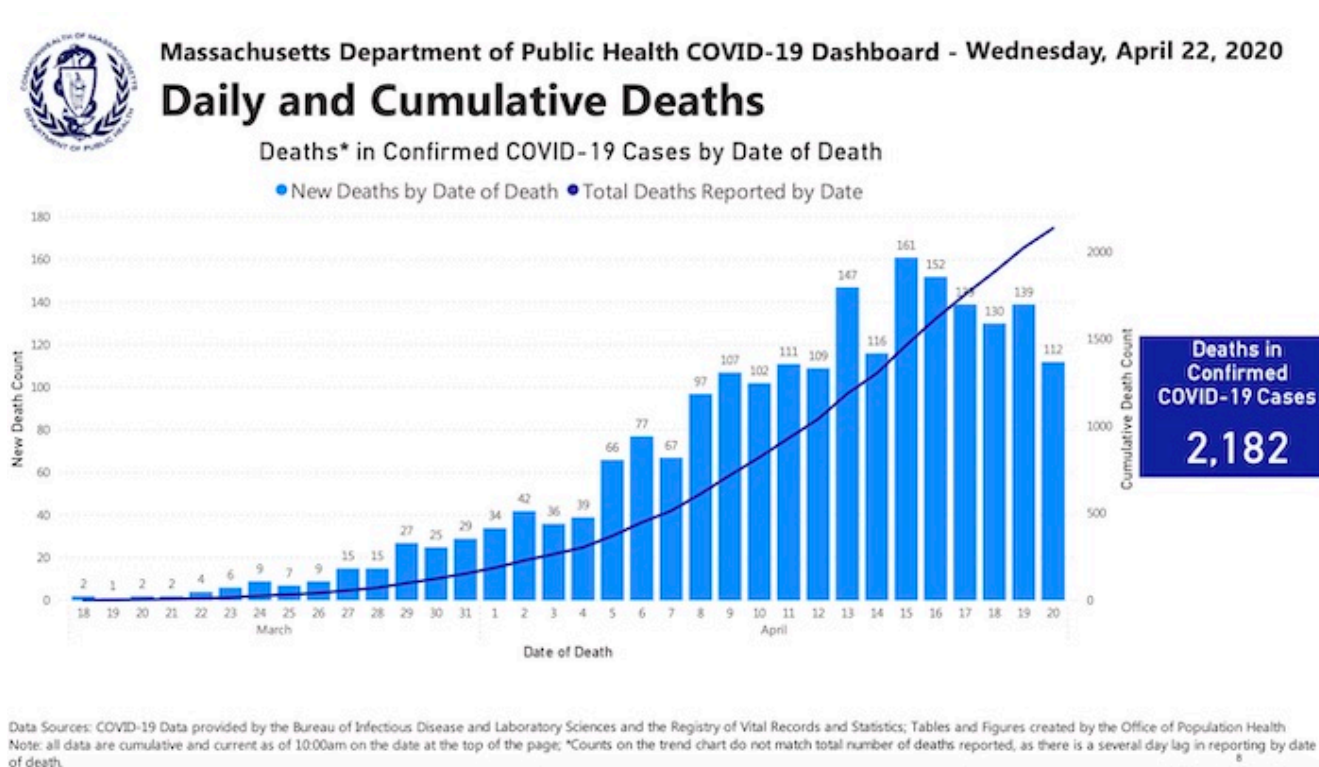
The latest weekly update showed a total of 22,952 people who are or have been subject to quarantines – 9,472 who are actively under quarantine and undergoing monitoring, and 13,480 who are no longer quarantined." – Katie Lannan, State House News Service

Massachusetts Coronavirus Update

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COVID-19 bringing to total to 41,199. This is an increase from Tuesday's 1,556 reported cases and is the first increase after five days of decreases. 221 new COVID-19 related deaths were reported since yesterday, up from 152, bringing the total deaths in Massachusetts to 2,182. 221 is the highest single-day death total in Massachusetts yet, topping 161 deaths on April 15.

As of 4 pm today, 180,462 people in Massachusetts have been tested for COVID-19.



Massachusetts school buildings will remain closed to students for the rest of this school year, Gov. Charlie Baker announced Tuesday, a dramatic step aimed at preventing a rebound in COVID-19 transmission once the state emerges from the worst of the outbreak. Full details [here](#).

The Massachusetts Division of Banks (DOB) has joined a multi-state initiative to secure payment relief options for Massachusetts student loan borrowers and issued a Consumer Advisory with important information and resources for private student loan borrowers. Full details [here](#).

New Bedford Coronavirus Update

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New Bedford added one more COVID-19 related death on Tuesday bringing the total to 10. No specific details (age, sex of the patient, etc) is available.

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Fall River Coronavirus Update

Due to similar lab reporting issues that other cities and towns have encountered, the City of Fall River now has 267 confirmed positive cases of COVID-19, with 124 cases that have cleared isolation. The Fall River Health Department is in contact with the individuals who have tested positive as well

as their contacts. These individuals are in isolation and quarantine.

Massachusetts reports 221 COVID-19 related deaths, highest one day total yet

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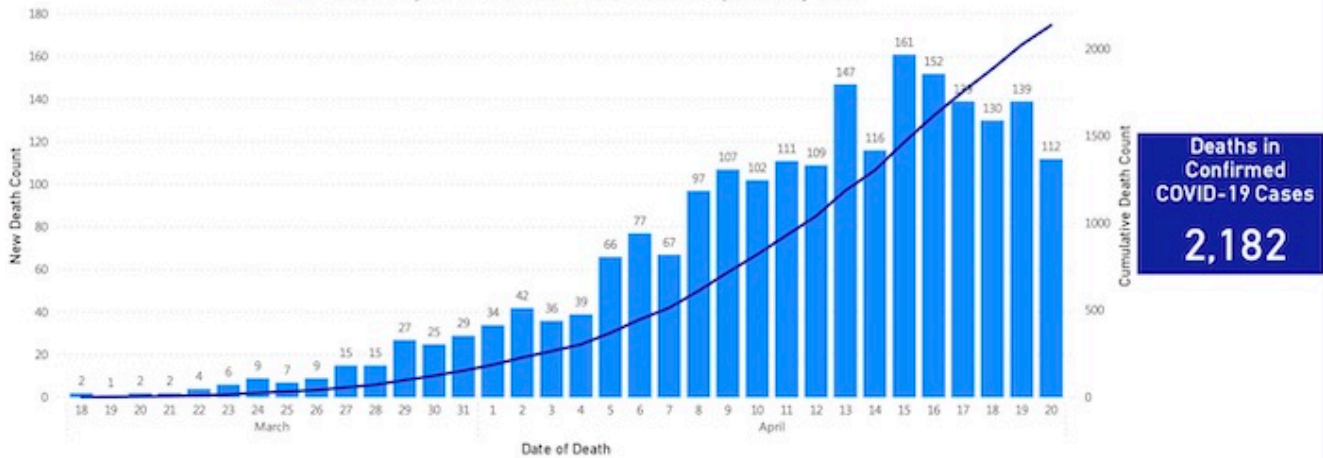
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Daily and Cumulative Deaths

Deaths* in Confirmed COVID-19 Cases by Date of Death

• New Deaths by Date of Death • Total Deaths Reported by Date



Data Sources: COVID-19 Data provided by the Bureau of Infectious Disease and Laboratory Sciences and the Registry of Vital Records and Statistics; Tables and Figures created by the Office of Population Health
Note: all data are cumulative and current as of 10:00am on the date at the top of the page; *Counts on the trend chart do not match total number of deaths reported, as there is a several day lag in reporting by date of death.

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