

# **Boston Police Department mourns passing of active duty Officer Jose V. Fontanez due to complications from COVID-19**

“It is with deep regret that the Boston Police Department announces the passing of active duty Boston Police Officer Jose V. Fontanez due to complications from COVID-19.

Officer Fontanez was a 29-year veteran of the BPD who was assigned to District E-13 (Jamaica Plain). Officer Fontanez received numerous commendations for his dedicated service during his 29-year career and was highly regarded by those he worked with, his supervisors and all who knew him.

Jose will be greatly missed by his friends and colleagues here at the BPD as we all send our heartfelt condolences to his family and loved ones during this tremendously sad and difficult time.”

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## **Warren introducing legislation to require federal government to better**

# report demographic data

## Coronavirus

Senator Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) is introducing the bicameral Equitable Data Collection and Disclosure on COVID-19 Act. The legislation is co-sponsored by Senators Kamala Harris (D-CA), Cory Booker (D-NJ), Edward J. Markey (D-MA), Jeff Merkley (D-OR), and 14 of their Senate colleagues. In the House, the legislation is being introduced by Representative Ayanna Pressley (D-MA-07), Chair of the Congressional Black Caucus Health Braintrust Representative Robin Kelly (D-IL-02), Chair of the Congressional Black Caucus Representative Karen Bass (D-CA-37), Representative Barbara Lee (D-CA-13), and is co-sponsored by more than 80 of their colleagues.

The bill would require the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to collect and report racial and other demographic data on COVID-19 testing, treatment, and fatality rates, and provide a summary of the final statistics and a report to Congress within 60 days after the end of the public health emergency. It would require HHS to use all available surveillance systems to post daily updates on the CDC website showing data on testing, treatment, and fatalities, disaggregated by race, ethnicity, sex, age, socioeconomic status, disability status, county, and other demographic information.

The legislation comes as reports across the United States point to stark racial disparities in COVID-19 cases and fatalities. In Michigan, Black residents account for 33% of confirmed COVID cases and 40% of fatalities, despite making up only 14% of the state's population. In Louisiana, 70% of those who have died from COVID-19 so far are Black, compared with 32% of the state's population. Initial data from Boston shows that among people whose race was reported, more than 40 percent of people infected were Black, compared with only 25%

of the population. This past weekend, Chelsea, Mass., a predominately Latinx community, was cited as a hot spot in the COVID 19 outbreak, with initial reporting confirming 400 new cases.

Specifically, the Equitable Data Collection and Disclosure on COVID-19 Act would require the reporting of the following data disaggregated by race, ethnicity, sex, age, socioeconomic status, disability status, county, and other demographic information:

- Data related to COVID-19 testing, including the number of individuals tested and the number of tests that were positive.
- Data related to treatment for COVID-19, including hospitalizations and intensive care unit admissions and duration;
- Data related to COVID-19 outcomes, including fatalities.

It would also authorize \$50 million in funding for the CDC, state public health agencies, the Indian Health Service, and other agencies to improve their data collection infrastructure and create an inter-agency commission to make recommendations on improving data collection and transparency and responding equitably to this crisis.

“We are facing a crisis unlike anything in our lifetimes – and it is hitting communities of color, people with disabilities, low-income communities, and Indian Country especially hard,” said Senator Warren. “Because of government-sponsored discrimination and systemic racism, communities of color are on the frontlines of this pandemic. To effectively slow the spread of the virus and ensure our response is robust and equitable, we need comprehensive national data on who is getting infected, who is getting treatment, and who is dying. That is how we can truly contain COVID-19 and save lives.”

“Black people and other people of color are being infected and dying from COVID-19 at alarming rates. Without the collection

and publication of data at the national level, we cannot fully understand the scope of the issue and take appropriate action to help the most hard-hit communities. We need to right the historical wrongs that have led to deep health disparities for generations. This is a necessary step,” said Senator Harris.

“The story of communities of color bearing the brunt of public suffering is a tragically familiar one in our nation’s history. In order to best allocate resources and information, we need demographic data that will help us better understand these health disparities and act to end them,” said Senator Booker.

“This virus is shining a bright light on the deplorable inequalities that already exist throughout our society and economy. The racism and disparities impacting communities of color, and low-income, immigrant, and Indigenous communities were unacceptable before the pandemic, and we cannot come out of this crisis without addressing them in a comprehensive way,” said Senator Markey. “We need data on coronavirus testing, treatment and fatalities, broken down by race and ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, and more in order to ensure everyone gets the health care access and economic assistance they need to save their lives.”

“To fully combat the threat of coronavirus, we have to first recognize that serious race-based health disparities have existed in our communities for generations-long before the coronavirus hit,” said Senator Merkley. “It’s Congress’ responsibility to address this crisis for everyone, which means tackling this unacceptable reality head on. If we don’t document the scope of the disparities, we’ll never fix the problem. We need access to nationwide data.”

Other Senate co-sponsors of the legislation are Senators Dick Durbin (D-IL), Chris Van Hollen (D-MD), Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), Tom Carper (D-DE), Tim Kaine (D-VA), Ben Cardin (D-MD), Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), Bernie Sanders (I-VT), Sheldon Whitehouse

(D-RI), Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Mark Warner (D-VA), Debbie Stabenow (D-MI), and Gary Peters (D-MI).

The Equitable Data Collection and Disclosure on COVID-19 Act is endorsed by the National Urban League, Lawyer's Committee on Civil Rights, Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum and National Action Network.

According to her office, Senator Warren has been working to ensure racial equity in the federal response to COVID-19. Last month, she along with her colleagues wrote to Health & Human Services Secretary Azar urging HHS to collect racial and ethnic demographic data on COVID-19 testing and treatment. Last week, she along with her colleagues sent a letter to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) calling on the agency to immediately release racial and ethnic data of Medicare beneficiaries who are tested or hospitalized for COVID-19.

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## **Massachusetts reports record 113 new COVID-19 deaths on Tuesday**

On April 14, the Massachusetts Public Health Department reported that the state added 1,296 more positive cases of COVID-19 bringing to total to 28,163. This is a decrease from Monday's 1,392 reported cases. 113 new COVID-19 related deaths were reported since yesterday bringing the total deaths in Massachusetts to 957.

As of 4 pm today, 126,551 people in Massachusetts have been tested for COVID-19 – 4,502 in the past 24 hours compared to

the previous day's total of 5,319.



New Bedford Mayor Jon Mitchell's office reported four additional COVID-19 related deaths Tuesday afternoon, bringing the total deaths in the city to seven. Mayor Mitchell reported **New Bedford's third COVID-19 related death on Friday**. There is no further information (i.e. age, sex of deceased) regarding the four new deaths. Full details **here**.

The City of Fall River has seen an additional 8 confirmed cases of COVID-19. An increase from yesterday's total. According to Mayor Coogan's Office, there are now 154 confirmed cases in Fall River. 38 cases have been cleared. Coogan confirmed Tuesday that so far Fall River has not seen a death due to the virus. Full details **here**.

A health care professional at the Bristol County Sheriff's Office has tested positive for COVID-19. Full details **here**.

Thousands of state health care workers will be getting a raise after the union representing licensed nurses and caregivers working in Massachusetts state hospitals and group homes struck a deal Sunday night with the state to increase pay by as much as \$10 an hour for the duration of the COVID-19 health emergency. Full details **here**.

As of April 14, the total amount of cases in The United States is 584,073 with 24,485 total deaths.

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## Town of Dartmouth continues

# **to show evidence of widespread community transmission of COVID-19**

“The Town of Dartmouth continues to show evidence of widespread community transmission of COVID-19 along with Bristol County, Massachusetts, and the United States.

The presence of community transmission of COVID-19 indicates that this disease can spread over large areas through person to person contact. In our highly mobile and connected world, transmission of this disease is not confined to specific geographic locations with confirmed cases – it is broad and extensive. The continued closure of non-essential businesses remains in effect in order to limit movement of communities in order to decrease disease spread. Additionally, please limit your travel to essential businesses such as grocery stores and pharmacies to once per week. Any type of travel to businesses carries a risk of transmitting COVID-19. Remember, no risk is better than minimal risk.

We understand that as efforts to decrease disease spread continues, the urge for greater movement outside of houses increases. Consider walking, biking, hiking, or exercising outside. Avoid group sports, playgrounds, and other high-contact public areas and activities. While we must remain physically distant from each other, we can continue to be socially connected with our friends, family, and community through digital and online platforms.

The peak of COVID-19 activity in Massachusetts is forecasted to occur in the coming weeks. This means that COVID-19 confirmed cases as of April 13, 2020 in Dartmouth 57, Bristol County 1,394, and Massachusetts 26,867 are expected to rise. The extent of the peak, however, continues to rely on your

committed efforts in following best practices to reduce the spread of this disease. Your actions are our best defense against this virus – together from afar we can all save lives.” -Town of Dartmouth.

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## **St. Anne's Credit Union Partners with other Financial Institutions to Donate Thousands of Medical Masks to Local Hospitals**

During the COVID-19 pandemic, St. Anne's continues to demonstrate their commitment to the community by offering assistance – and thanks – to those that need it the most: the first responders. St. Anne's, in partnership with Taunton Federal Credit Union, BankFive, New Bedford Credit Union and other local financial institutions are supporting local hospitals – including Saint Anne's Hospital and Charlton Memorial Hospital – by donating thousands of much-needed masks in order to provide safety and support to physicians and nurses on the front lines of care.

“Giving back to the communities that we are a part of is at the core of our business. Our Credit Union is not a building or a business, it's people unified for a common goal,” said Eileen M. Danahey, President & CEO of St. Anne's Credit Union. “Our organization has a deep bond with the communities we serve and we feel a profound sense of gratitude for the healthcare workers. Over the past few months we have seen



countless acts of bravery and sacrifice from these essential workers and feel it is our duty as good corporate citizens to give them our full support. Through our cooperative donation, it is our hope that we can help limit the spread of this virus and ease the burden on local medical personnel.”

For more information about how St. Anne’s is supporting their members, employees and the local community – and their remote banking service offerings to bank from home – visit [www.stannes.com](http://www.stannes.com).

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## **New Bedford, United Way partner in “Help United” the Greater New Bedford COVID-19 Response Fund**

In Greater New Bedford, residents are already feeling the impact of COVID-19. Many local businesses have closed or moved to reduced hours, workers are either out of work or struggling to find childcare, and schools have been closed until May. It’s an uncertain time and many are finding themselves in financial situations where they have to choose between food, rent and/ or medication.

United Way of Greater New Bedford is stepping in to help, and the City of New Bedford is actively supporting the effort. United Way has established the Help United – Greater New Bedford COVID-19 Response Fund to assist residents effected by the Coronavirus. This fund will provide cash assistance to out of work service workers and retired or out of work seniors over 65 in the Greater New Bedford area.

“United Way is no stranger to helping those in most need in our community. We have been working around the clock to ensure people have what they need during this difficult and uncertain time,” said Michelle N. Hantman, President & CEO. “We’ve set up the Help United Fund to assist residents financially and our Hunger Commission is making sure local food pantries are well stocked.”

The Help United Fund is the only local fund being endorsed by the City of New Bedford and Mayor Jon Mitchell.

“The COVID-19 pandemic has abruptly turned upside down the lives of many of our fellow residents of Greater New Bedford, some of whom will not be eligible for federal relief. It is with them in mind that United Way launched this fund,” said Mayor Jon Mitchell. “I encourage everyone in our region to step forward with whatever you can afford in support of our friends and neighbors.”

Mayor Mitchell has appointed Christian Farland as Chairman of the Help United Response Fund. Mr. Farland is a professional civil engineer and the founder and President of Farland Corporation, Inc., a site contracting company specializing in residential and commercial site development, and the President of Thompson Farland, Inc., a civil engineering land surveying company.

“The impact of the COVID-19 crisis on our community is unprecedented,” said Farland. “As a business owner with deep ties to New Bedford, I am increasingly concerned for the service workers in our cities and towns, laid off or working reduced hours that compromise their ability to provide for their families. I am confident in United Way of Greater New Bedford’s ability to effectively raise and designate resources to those in need, and proud to support this effort.”

You can make a donation to the Help United Fund by texting **HELPUNITED** to 313131 or visiting [unitedwayofgnb.org](https://unitedwayofgnb.org).

“We aren’t sure how long our community will be impacted by the coronavirus, but the more donations we receive, the longer we will be able to support residents and keep them in their homes,” said Hantman.

Those looking for assistance from the fund can review the guidelines and apply at [unitedwayofgnb.org/help-united](https://unitedwayofgnb.org/help-united).

In addition to the financial assistance to residents, United Way’s Hunger Commission continues to deliver food to pantries in Greater New Bedford. Restaurants with food they are unable to use are encouraged to donate their food to the Hunger Commission by calling 508-994-9625. Those looking for food assistance should visit [unitedwayofgnb.org](https://unitedwayofgnb.org) to see an up-to-date list of open pantries and their hours.

Anyone with questions regarding COVID-19 should dial 2-1-1 to get information. Mass 211 is a 24/7, free, confidential hotline that provides information on local resources. 211 has been designated by the Department of Public Health to answer your questions. Mass 211 is funded by local United Ways.

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## **Community Advisory: Health Care Professional at Bristol County Sheriff’s Office Tests Positive for COVID-19**

A health care professional at the Bristol County Sheriff’s Office has tested positive for COVID-19.

“She has no symptoms and is feeling well,” Bristol County

Sheriff Thomas M. Hodgson said Tuesday.

The health care professional, a mental health clinician, was tested on April 8 and received the results over the weekend. She is expected to make a full recovery and return to work when cleared by her doctor.

She was in the facility on April 8-10 but had extremely limited contact with staff and inmates. All BCSO staffers inside the correctional facilities are wearing ppe equipment at all times, and mental health consultations with inmates are being done between a plexiglass partition.

She is the fourth Bristol County staff member to test positive for COVID. 19. A nurse who tested positive last month has recovered and returned to duty, and a K9 Officer who tested positive earlier this month is returning to duty on Tuesday. A Corrections Officer that tested positive earlier this month remains at home but has reported feeling well and is expected back soon.

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 these 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 policies and procedures we have in place to deal with infectious diseases are working and the team here has been doing an amazing job,” Sheriff Hodgson said. “No one in our incarcerated population has tested positive for COVID-19, and of the four positive tests among staff, one is already back, one returning today, and the other two are feeling well. These next two weeks are expected to be the surge in Massachusetts, so I hope everyone stays safe. We’ll get through this together.”

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## New Bedford officials report four more COVID-19 related deaths, total rises to seven

New Bedford Mayor Jon Mitchell’s office reported four additional COVID-19 related deaths Tuesday afternoon, bringing the total deaths in the city to seven. Mayor Mitchell reported **New Bedford’s third COVID-19 related death on Friday**. There is no further information (i.e. age, sex of deceased) regarding the four new deaths.

Officials reported 156 positive cases of COVID-19 Tuesday morning, up from the **151 cases they reported on Saturday** and up from 136 on Saturday. New Bedford doesn’t report totals on Sundays.

The City of Fall River has seen an additional 5 confirmed cases of COVID-19. According to Mayor Coogan’s Office, there are 146 confirmed cases in Fall River. Full details **here**.

On April 13, the Massachusetts Public Health Department reported that the state added 1,392 more positive cases of

COVID-19 bringing to total to 26,867. This is a decrease from Sunday's 2,615 reported cases. 88 new COVID-19 related deaths were reported since yesterday bringing the total deaths in Massachusetts to 844. Full details [here](#).

Thousands of state health care workers will be getting a raise after the union representing licensed nurses and caregivers working in Massachusetts state hospitals and group homes struck a deal Sunday night with the state to increase pay by as much as \$10 an hour for the duration of the COVID-19 health emergency. Full details [here](#).

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## **New Bedford reports 156 total positive COVID-19 cases Tuesday, up 5 since Monday**

UPDATE: New Bedford health officials this afternoon reported four more COVID-19 related deaths bringing the total in the city to seven. Full details [here](#).

CORRECTION: There were five new cases of COVID-19 in New Bedford, not four as previously reported. BREAKING:

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Mayor Mitchell reported **New Bedford's third COVID-19 related death on Friday**. No deaths have been reported since.

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## **New Bedford Police Animal Control statement on pets and the spread of COVID-19**



**NEW BEDFORD POLICE  
ANIMAL CONTROL DEPARTMENT  
871 ROCKDALE AVENUE  
NEW BEDFORD, MA 02740**

Emanuel Maciel  
Director of Animal Control  
Certified Animal Control Officer/Inspector

Over the past few weeks, the coronavirus pandemic has greatly affected our lives, and I recognize that this is a challenging time. I want to assure you that **New Bedford Animal Control continues to prioritize the health and safety of our Animal Control Officers, Constituents, and the animals in our care.**

We want to stress there is **no current evidence** that suggests the coronavirus can be transmitted to or from companion animals. We have been taking necessary measures to mitigate concerns around public interaction with our Animal Control Officers. We have gathered some information that may be helpful below as always your safety should be first Stay Safe and Healthy may God Bless you and your family during these times.

**Considerations for COVID-19 patients under home care and isolation who have pets or other animals:**

People with COVID-19 should be advised to tell their public health point of contact that they have pets or other animals in their home.

In addition to other prevention measures, people with COVID-19 who are identified by public health officials as requiring home care and isolation should be advised to limit interaction with pets and other animals. Specifically, while these people are symptomatic, they should maintain separation from pets as they would with other household members, and avoid direct contact with pets, including petting, snuggling, being kissed or licked, and sharing food. Service animals should be permitted to remain with their handlers.

If possible, a household member should be designated to care for pets in the home. If the individual in home care and isolation must care for pet(s), including service animals, they should ensure they wash their hands before and after caring for pets and wear a facemask while interacting with pets, until they are medically cleared to return to normal activities.

If you are not ill with COVID-19, you can interact with your pet as you normally would, including walking, feeding, and playing. You should continue to practice good hygiene during those interactions (e.g., wash hands before and after interacting with your pet; ensure your pet is kept well-groomed; regularly clean your pet's food and water bowls, bedding material, and toys).



**At this point there is no evidence that companion animals, including pets, can spread COVID-19.**

When a public health professional is notified of a pet or other animal, in the home of a person with COVID-19, they should notify the state public health veterinarian or other designated animal health professional.

This is a rapidly evolving situation and information will be updated as it becomes available

Infectious disease experts and multiple international and domestic human and animal health organizations agree there is no evidence at this point to indicate that pets become ill with COVID-19 or that they spread it to other animals, including people.

Out of an abundance of caution, it is recommended that those ill with COVID-19 limit contact with animals until more information is known about the virus. Have another member of your household take care of walking, feeding, and playing with your pet. If you have a service animal or you must care for your pet, then wear a facemask; don't share food, kiss, or hug them; and wash your hands before and after any contact with them.

As always, careful hand washing and other infection control practices can greatly reduce the chance of spreading any disease.

**Here are some tips and ways to protect your pet during these times.**

- 1) Double check that you're pet vaccinated and is registered with your city.
- 2) Identify a friend or family member who can care for your pet should you get sick
- 3) Have extra pet food and supplies on hand.
- 4) Ensure your pet is wearing proper identification
- 5) Make sure your pet's microchip info is up to date and have an emergency contact
- 6) Make an easily shareable record of your pets needs (medication, food, where you keep the lease, etc) that you can share if you need someone to care for your pet in an emergency
- 7) Notify Emergency personnel that you have an animal at home who will need care.

New Bedford Animal Control understands the fear and uncertainty that we are all facing and we are here as always to support our community in any way that we can. As always, careful hand washing and other infection control practices can greatly reduce the chance of spreading any disease. Continue washing your hands, cleaning diligently and be Safe and Healthy. May God Bless you and your family **NBACSTRONG**.

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