

Gov. Baker announces actions to expand health care workforce, support for providers during COVID-19

Governor Baker announced new actions that will support efforts to expand the Commonwealth's health care workforce by expediting licensing for certain health care workers and onboarding for health care volunteers who have signed up through the Administration's new online volunteer portal. The Administration also outlined a Department of Public Health order that will support continuing steps being taken to expand care capacity for older adults infected with COVID-19, in addition to other actions designed to support providers and businesses during the COVID-19 outbreak.

Expedited Onboarding Of Health Care Volunteers: Last week, the Administration launched an initiative to recruit volunteer medical professionals to support hospitals as the Commonwealth continues to expand medical capacity. Since launching the initiative, more than 1,800 volunteers have already signed up, reflective of the Commonwealth's world-class health care workforce. To support expedited onboarding of these volunteers, the Department of Public Health has issued an order authorizing the Office of Preparedness and Emergency Management to perform a CORI check on any volunteer who registered through the volunteer portal without a notarized CORI acknowledgment form. The Order requires any entity performing a CORI check pursuant to the Order to implement sufficient compensating controls to reasonably verify an individual's identity, including inspection of a photographic form of government-issued identification via teleconference.

On-Demand Licensing For Health Professionals: To further

support the Commonwealth's health care workforce, the Department of Public Health has issued an order designed to provide on-demand licensing and re-licensing for certain health care professionals. The Order expedites licensing for professionals with licenses in good standing in other states, and professionals who have allowed their Massachusetts licenses to expire within the past 10 years while in good standing. This order applies to a wide range of health professionals: registered nurse, licensed practical nurse, advanced practice registered nurse, dentist, dental hygienist, dental assistant, pharmacist, pharmacy technician, nursing home administrator, physician assistant, respiratory therapist, perfusionist, genetic counselor, community health worker and emergency medical technician.

Expanding Care Capacity: As part of its efforts to expand existing health care capacity, the Administration's COVID-19 Response Command Center is working with long-term care facilities to establish dedicated skilled nursing facilities to care for individuals infected with COVID-19. The initiative offers an alternative location where individuals who are stable but still need medical care can be transferred to recover, relieving pressure on hospitals and opening up hospital beds for the treatment of patients with the greatest medical need. The transfer of existing residents out of participating facilities will be handled with the utmost care. The Administration has received federal approval from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) for this initiative.

The Department of Public Health has issued an order waiving certain MassHealth regulations regarding the transfers and discharge of long-term care facility residents, for the limited purpose of safely transferring and discharging all residents living in a long-term care facility that is intended to be used as a designated COVID-19 facility. The Command Center has worked with the Beaumont Rehabilitation and Skilled

Nursing Center in Worcester to start this effort, which will help bring 300 skilled nursing facility beds online in central Massachusetts. The Command Center will continue to work with long-term care facilities to add care capacity for older adults.

Financial Relief For Care Providers: Governor Baker today issued an order providing the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) administrative flexibility to extend financial relief to providers of critical health care and social services that serve EOHHS clients, including members of MassHealth. The financial relief may be in the form of temporary rate adjustments, supplemental payments, and new rate and payment methodologies that reflect the modified ways services are being delivered. These measures will be subject to the approval of the Secretary of the Executive Office for Administration and Finance. This will allow EOHHS to extend critical financial support to:

Providers that are facing extraordinary demand due to the COVID-19 emergency, while, at the same time, have lost significant revenue because they have had to cancel other procedures and appointments;

Providers that are necessary to keep vulnerable individuals safe in their homes or residences and out of more acute settings like hospitals; and

Human service providers that have been forced to respond to the unanticipated circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic by altering the way they deliver services and the hours and scope of these services.

Shareholder Meeting Requirements: Under Massachusetts law, public companies can permit shareholders and their proxies to participate in annual or special shareholder meetings by remote communication, but they are also required to hold a meeting in a physical space that shareholders can attend in

person. Given the challenges of meeting such requirements while non-essential workers are required to stay home and gatherings are limited to 10 people, Governor Baker today issued an order adjusting this meeting requirement. The Governor's order permits public companies to hold annual or special shareholder meetings completely by means of remote communication, until 60 days after the end of the state of emergency. Additionally, if a public company has already sent written notice to its shareholders of an annual or special meeting to be held in a physical location, this order allows that company to notify its shareholders that the meeting now will be held solely through remote communication without mailing another notice, provided they issue a press release, send email notice where possible, and take other reasonable steps to notify their shareholders of the change.

New Bedford reports 27 total cases of COVID-19, up 14 cases since Sunday

According to the New Bedford Mayor's office, New Bedford has a total of 27 positive cases of COVID-19 as of noon on Monday, March 30. This is an increase of 14 **since Sunday morning** when 13 were reported. The sharp increase is mostly due to a spike in testing.

Fall River has reported **three new cases since Saturday, bringing the city's total to 12**. The City of Fall River has not updated its numbers for Monday yet.

Bristol County increased from 179 on Saturday to 208 on Sunday – an increase of 29 new COVID-19 cases.

As of 4 pm On Sunday, Public Health officials have tested a total of 39,066 people in Massachusetts resulting in 4,955 positive results of COVID-19 – an increase of 698 new cases since Saturday. Officials also reported four more deaths since yesterday bringing the total deaths in Massachusetts to 48. None of the four deaths were in Bristol County. Full details [here](#).

New Bedford reports 16 total cases of COVID-19 Monday morning

UPDATE: New Bedford has seen its positive COVID-19 cases nearly double from Sunday morning to noon today – going from 13 to 27. This is mostly due to increased testing.

According to the New Bedford Mayor's office, New Bedford has a total of 16 positive cases of COVID-19 as of Monday, March 30. This is an increase of three **since Sunday** and four since Saturday. Fall River has reported **three new cases since Saturday, bringing the city's total to 12**. The City of Fall River has not updated its numbers for Monday yet.

Bristol County increased from 179 on Saturday to 208 on Sunday – an increase of 29 new COVID-19 cases.

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here.

OPINION: “New Bedford, your loved one will possibly die scared and alone instead of surrounded by their loved ones if you don’t take precautions.”

“I want to say something to make people understand how serious they need to be taking this pandemic. Most people with good health will never really understand the true meaning of how bad this is for other members of our society who are not as lucky to have good health. To those people, I say how lucky you are!

Let me explain to you what the potential of this virus is if we do not take every precaution there is to keep from allowing it to spread.

If you live with a loved parent grandparent or other family member or friend that has health issues such as COPD, diabetes, rheumatoid arthritis. You need to socially distance yourself (6 feet) from all other people. That means hanging out at someone’s house. Riding around with others in vehicles and using caution with public transportation. And if you choose to not take these precautions, this is what happens!

You have just socially spread Covid 19 into your home. Your

mother, father or grandparent are now going to get very sick. If, and this is a big if, they recover you and they are very lucky! Think about the ones that are not that lucky. You will need to say goodbye to them at the nearest medical facility because you will not be allowed in with them. With luck, the facility will have the proper medical equipment to help them.

They will be hooked up to a ventilator and be alone for long periods of time, only to have an overworked health professional check on them occasionally while they have dozens of other patients to check on. Your loved one will possibly die scared and alone instead of surrounded by their loved ones.

Think about this when you say it won't hurt anyone if I go hang out for a short while." -□Kelly Timms Hinckley□.

OPINION: “You are irresponsible pigs if you discard your face masks or gloves on the ground!”

“In this era of ‘social distancing,’ we are supposed to be concerned about spreading the virus, and protecting ourselves and others, right? But then we have piggish slobs who think it’s OK to throw their ‘protection’ on the ground who pollute and potentially spread the virus to others.

Just think of some little child picking this up off the ground because he/she doesn’t know any better. It could be your child or your nieces, nephews, cousins...



Photo by Dennis Malenfant.

Got to laugh, and it's not even funny (nor, I'm sure, to those of you affected). THINK, PEOPLE! This was at Market Basket in Fall River." -Dennis Malenfant.

"When I went to the Stop & Shop in Fairhaven this afternoon. You're pigs! Do you alone deserve protection? Lazy, look ahead: there is a trash can. Irresponsible pigs! The white gloves are not the same they are in different points. ? It is a lack of respect for the employees who are there to serve you too. ??Lazy idiots. ???" -Mari Rowe.



Photo by Mari Rowe.

OPINION: “Enough is Enough!! New Bedford public transit is not be used just because you’re bored!”

This was sent to us from a New Bedford bus driver:

“Enough is Enough !!

Just because public transit is running doesn’t mean we are here for you to spend your time riding around for no reason other than boredom. We are designated as an essential service in our city we are not here for you because you have nothing else to do!! We are not here for you because you feel like getting out of the house for a while.

We are in a state of emergency and this not a vacation!! Every passenger that steps on our bus puts us the operators at risk , we really don't want to be here but we realize how important our service is for some passengers. You don't see how many times a day we wash our hands and sanitize our buses to keep us and our passengers safe.

You do not see our families who worry about us every minute we are at work. We have our jobs to do and we realize the importance of our job is to you. So please only use the service for essential rides!! Our management and the Authority have made every attempt to help us be safe and now we need the public's help!!

I am speaking on behalf of the operators and maintenance staff of Amalgamated Transit Union local 1037 here in New Bedford Ma. "We Move This City"

Please share our message it doesn't matter what city you're in!!" – Tony Sousa.

New Bedford reports 13 total cases of COVID-19 on Sunday

According to the New Bedford Mayor's office, New Bedford has a total of 13 positive cases of COVID-19 as of Sunday, March 29. This is an increase of one **since Saturday**. Fall River has reported **three new cases since Saturday, bringing the city's total to 12.**

Bristol County increased from 179 on Saturday to 208 on Sunday – an increase of 29 new COVID-19 cases.

As of 4 pm On Sunday, Public Health officials have tested a total of 39,066 people in Massachusetts resulting in 4,955 positive results of COVID-19 – an increase of 698 new cases since Saturday. Officials also reported four more deaths since yesterday bringing the total deaths in Massachusetts to 48. None of the four deaths were in Bristol County. Full details [here](#).

Massachusetts health officials report 698 new COVID-19 cases, four new deaths

Massachusetts Public Health officials report testing a total of 39,066 people in Massachusetts resulting in 4,955 positive results of COVID-19. Officials also reported four more deaths since yesterday bringing the total deaths in Massachusetts to 48. The 24-hour increase is more than 4,000 more tested resulting in 698 more positive cases. The four deaths is a recent low after seeing 10 deaths each on Friday and Saturday.

Bristol County increased from 179 on Saturday to 208 on Sunday an increase of 29 new COVID-19 cases. None of the four deaths were in Bristol County.

New Bedford now has 13 positive cases of COVID-19, Fall River has 12:
<https://www.newbedfordguide.com/new-bedford-reports-13-total-cases-of-covid-19-on-sunday/2020/03/29>

Here's a look at the positive test results by Massachusetts

County and the details on the four most recent deaths:

MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH



Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Cases in MA

As of March 29, 2020

Confirmed Cases Reported =4955

CATEGORY	NUMBER OF CONFIRMED CASES
County	
Barnstable	148
Berkshire	151
Bristol	208
Dukes and Nantucket	8
Essex	570
Franklin	41
Hampden	201
Hampshire	37
Middlesex	981
Norfolk	548
Plymouth	325
Suffolk	940
Worcester	337
Unknown	460
Sex	
Female	2519
Male	2402
Unknown	34
Age Group	
≤19 years of age	101
20-29 years of age	842
30-39 years of age	866
40-49 years of age	810
50-59 years of age	953
60-69 years of age	686
≥ 70 years of age	690
Unknown	7
Deaths	
Attributed to COVID-19	48

Key Updates

- More than 39,000 individuals have been tested, up from 35049.
- There are 698 new cases for a total of 4955.
- 4 new deaths were reported for a total of 48. These include:
 - Male, 80s, Essex county, unknown preexisting conditions, hospitalized
 - Female, 90s, Middlesex county, preexisting conditions, hospitalized
 - Female, 70s, Norfolk county, unknown preexisting conditions, hospitalized
 - Female, 80s, Berkshire county, preexisting conditions, not hospitalized

Gov. Baker Launches Online Portal for Personal Protective Equipment, Volunteers to Support COVID-19 Outbreak

The Baker-Polito Administration announced an online portal where individuals and companies can easily donate or sell personal protective equipment (PPE) and volunteer to support the COVID-19 outbreak in Massachusetts. This effort will ensure that front line responders get the protective equipment they need to stay and push for more trained volunteers to join the response.

“Massachusetts has already received generous donations from countless organizations, and by launching this portal we’ll make it easier to streamline these offers and quickly distribute supplies to those in need,” said Governor Charlie Baker. “We also need more volunteers to help support our response to this unprecedented public health emergency, and urge people to sign up to lend a hand. Our administration will continue making every effort to secure supplies from all possible resources to support our front line workers during these tough times.”

The Commonwealth’s **COVID-19 PPE Procurement and Donation Program** creates an easy portal allowing companies and organizations to sell or donate protective equipment that is in short supply given the global demands for such items.

By visiting the COVID-19 PPE Procurement and Donation **website**, businesses and organizations can offer for purchase or donation critically needed personal protective equipment,

including:



The initiative announced today bolsters current efforts to leverage traditional and emergency supply chain channels.

“We have a constant demand and need for personal protective equipment (PPE) available to our medical, first responder and essential service communities. Over the past week, hundreds of deliveries of PPE have been made to front line health care providers, and first responders, but we need so much more,” said Secretary of Health and Human Services Marylou Sudders, the Commonwealth’s COVID-19 Command Center Director. “Last week more than 28,000 masks, and 120,000 pairs of gloves were distributed, and we’ve placed more than \$50 million in orders for additional supplies. We are also waiting on our third delivery from the Strategic National Stockpile.”

The program also provides an entry point for local manufacturers to get more information on adapting their businesses to produce more equipment here in Massachusetts, an effort being led by the administration’s recently established Manufacturing Emergency Response Team, co-chaired by Housing and Economic Development Secretary Mike Kennealy, and Mike Tamasi, President and CEO of AccuRounds, a precision components manufacturer located in Avon, MA.

“It comes as no surprise that both manufacturers and university R&D partners across Massachusetts have stepped up during this challenging time to support those saving lives and provide logistical expertise toward stopping the spread of this virus,” said Secretary of Housing and Economic Development Mike Kennealy, Co-Chair of the Advanced Manufacturing Collaborative. “This portal serves as a front door for companies that think their operations can be adapted to address manufacturing supply chain issues and produce the equipment needed by those on the front lines.”

A call for volunteers:

To support ongoing COVID-19 emergency response efforts, the Baker-Polito Administration has partnered with the Massachusetts Medical Society to match health and medical volunteers with our communities and health care providers based on skillsets and need. There is an immediate need for respiratory therapists and public health nurses, and the administration is asking health care professionals interested in volunteering to sign up by clicking [here](#). Since launching the initiative, more than 1,000 people have already registered.

For more information on COVID-19, visit [Mass.gov/covid19](https://mass.gov/covid19). Get notifications to your phone or other mobile device by texting COVIDMA to 888-777.

Medical marijuana curbside pickup, phone/internet sales now allowed in Massachusetts

Colin A. Young
State House News Service

Medical marijuana patients soon might not have to even get out of their car to pick up their medicine.

The Cannabis Control Commission (CCC) late Friday authorized medical marijuana treatment centers to “add sales by phone or electronic means” and to transfer “marijuana and marijuana products in the parking area of their premises or to an individual at the entrance.”

Before MTCs will be allowed to start curbside pickup, they must submit to the CCC a “standard operating procedure” for curbside pickup, including an updated facility layout with curbside sales areas identified, traffic queuing plans, and proposed signage to direct patients. The companies must also notify their host community, including police and public health officials, of their plans.

“Safe patient access during Massachusetts’ state of emergency requires regulatory responsiveness and intentional protocols aimed at reducing exposure to Coronavirus,” Executive Director Shawn Collins said. “I am proud the Commission has deployed several system and policy enhancements to the Medical Use of Marijuana Program that both improve the patient experience and maintain compliant operations in the face of unanticipated disruptions to our way of life.”

The MTCs must still adhere to all the other laws and regulations around marijuana sales. No curbside transfer will be allowed if any non-patient under the age of 21 is present, and the MTCs will still check IDs and patient registration cards. Video camera coverage of all areas where marijuana is handled or dispensed will still be required.

2020FRIDAY_Administrative-Order_Curbside-Operations