

Field hospitals going up in Massachusetts in preparation for fall and winter COVID-19 surge

By Matt Murphy

State House News Service

In April when the state began setting up field hospitals in Boston, Worcester and elsewhere to deal with the crushing volume of COVID-19 patients needing care, more than 2,000 people a day were being diagnosed with the virus and hospitals were seeing coronavirus patient volumes creep close to 4,000 statewide.

But as Gov. Charlie Baker prepares to bring back the medical tents and convention center cots to prepare for the fall and winter surge of COVID-19, the governor said Thursday the situation facing Massachusetts is “nowhere near” the dire circumstances of the spring.

Baker plans to announce detailed plans to reopen field hospitals on Friday, at which point Massachusetts will have likely crossed the grim threshold of 10,000 confirmed deaths from the disease. There had been 9,994 deaths reported by the state through Wednesday.

He said the facilities will be reopening “in places that will be familiar to people,” which could include the Boston Convention and Exhibition Center, the DCU Center in Worcester, the University of Massachusetts Lowell or Joint Base Cape Cod in Bourne, all of which hosted field hospitals in the spring.

“This is a drill and a process that I think at this point we have a fair amount of experience with and I think in many

ways, this is not just an issue for Massachusetts. It's a challenge for the rest of the country and frankly most of the western world," Baker said.

Baker was in Carlisle with Education Secretary Jim Peyser and Elementary and Secondary Education Commissioner Jeff Riley to tour classrooms and observe how the district has adapted to the pandemic to provide in-person learning.

The administration has been adamant that schools are largely safe spaces if proper precautions are taken, and that students should be learning in the classroom, as opposed to remote from home.

Along with 2,495 new cases on Wednesday, the Department of Public Health reported that the state's hospitals were operating at 72 percent occupancy of non-intensive care unit beds and 50 percent capacity in ICUs.

The number of patients hospitalized Wednesday stood at 659, which was up from 513 last Friday.

Asked about entering "uncharted water" with the rise in confirmed COVID-19 cases, Baker said the situation this fall cannot be compared to the spring when the state was testing 10 times fewer residents each day and the health care system had never seen the virus and was unprepared.

"We're nowhere near the uncharted territory we were at in the spring. Nowhere near it. Nowhere," Baker said. "We are definitely dealing with a surge that we talked about throughout the summer and the beginning of the fall and we're currently the largest per capita tester in the United States."

While the virus has been spreading more rapidly over the past several weeks, Baker has increased his pressure on school systems to bring students back into classrooms to prevent more lost learning time, and Health and Human Services Secretary Marylou Sudders has said the administration does not plan to

shut down the health care system for preventative care and elective procedures as it did in the spring.

“We currently have about 550 people in the hospital. We had 5,500 people in hospital at the peak of this back in the spring. Ten times. It’s very different,” Baker said, though his numbers were not correct. Hospitalization never climbed higher than 4,000, according to DPH data.

Baker pointed to a story in the Washington Post published Thursday that blamed social gatherings like dinner parties, game nights and sleepovers for the rise of COVID-19 across the country.

“It’s the stuff I’ve been talking about for months now. Small informal casual gatherings with a bigger circle of friends than people were spending time with back at the beginning of the summer,” Baker said.

Baker visited two classrooms where he said it was clear the Carlisle public schools were using “every single square inch of space that’s available” to keep students distanced, and using unique lunch scheduling and other strategies to ensure students and teachers remain safe.

“The other thing is, every child we saw as we wandered through there was wearing a mask and didn’t seem all that stressed about it, which makes them a lot more mature than many of the adults I know,” Baker said.

Earlier in the day, Baker teamed up with the governors of six other regional states to suspend interstate youth hockey competitions for public and private school teams through the end of the year in response to coronavirus outbreaks linked to the on-ice tournaments.

Baker announced the decision with a coalition of Republican and Democratic governors from New Jersey, Maine, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, Vermont and Connecticut, but not New York.

The governor said that the regional approach was necessary as COVID-19 cases continue to spike across the states, and contact tracing has led investigators to outbreaks stemming from interstate youth hockey activities.

He said the problem had less to do with the actual competitions on the ice and more to do with the day-long congregation and socialization of parents and players at the rink while tournaments are being played.

“We want everyone playing across the region with the same set of rules, the same set of protocols, the same set of guidelines that are all being enforced and administered the same way in every state and it’s going to take us a few weeks to figure that out,” Baker said.

Baker’s day concluded with a virtual ribbon cutting to celebrate the completion of the second phase of the Overlook Terrace housing development in Boston’s Orient Heights East Boston neighborhood.

On that Zoom call with Boston Mayor Marty Walsh and others, Baker renewed his call for the Legislature to address the exclusionary zoning rules that he said have made it very difficult in places outside of Boston to build affordable, transit-oriented and other types of housing.

The House and Senate are both considering Baker’s housing proposals as part of a larger economic development package currently being negotiated by a conference committee.

“I really do hope that we can get that done before the end of the session,” Baker said.

Boston Police Department seeking public's help in identifying individuals in violent hit and run

The Boston Police Department is seeking the public's assistance in effort to identify the individuals in the enclosed video in relation to an assault and a hit and run in South Boston.

The facts and circumstances of the original incident are as follows: At about 8:09 PM on Monday, November 9, 2020 officers assigned to District C-6 (South Boston) responded to a radio call for a pedestrian struck in the area of Dorchester Street and W. 4th Street in South Boston. On arrival, officers spoke to the victim who stated he was assaulted by several unknown males riding dirt bikes and four wheelers. The victim stated the individuals punched and kicked the victim, knocking him to the ground where they continued to run him over injuring his arms, shoulders, back and head. The victim stated the individuals then fled the area. The victim was transported to a local hospital with non-life-threatening injuries.

The Boston Police Department continues to actively review the facts and circumstances surrounding this incident. Anyone with information is strongly urged to contact detectives assigned to District C-6 (South Boston) at (617) 343-4742.

Community members with information relative to the storage of these recreational vehicles who wish to assist in these investigations 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.

Bristol Community College gives urban high school students an opportunity to gain college credit for free

Bristol Community College's new program is opening the door to college for high school students who may not have been able to afford the opportunity to or pictured themselves earning a college degree. Funded through private donations, CollegeTrax allows students from Massachusetts cities, New Bedford and Fall River, which rank among the lowest in the state for college attainment, to earn free college credits and exposure to the college experience.

"Our community is in need. As we face a pandemic and take a deep look at the social and economic barriers that affect lower income communities, we need to find quick wins along the way to help our community overcome these challenges," said Laura L. Douglas, President, Bristol Community College. "CollegeTrax offers an incentive for students who may not have envisioned themselves in a college class experiencing what many times is only taken advantage of by students who can afford this potentially life-changing opportunity."

The free Early College initiative aims to close our region's equity gaps and provide underserved students in Bristol's

communities with the opportunity to try college while earning valuable college credits in a supportive college environment. Bristol County, that the college serves, ranks highest in Massachusetts for the percent of population 25 years of age and older without a high school diploma (or equivalent) at 16.3%, according to the US Census Bureau.

“College is a gateway to great opportunities and upward economic mobility for students and we applaud Bristol Community College for expanding access to it through the CollegeTrax program,” said Ed Lambert, Executive Director, Massachusetts Business Alliance for Education. “This type of innovation improves opportunities for students by increasing academic rigor, connecting students to college success and saving students from future debt.”

With a Fellow from Harvard University’s Center for Education Policy Research, Early College in Massachusetts is being robustly evaluated. A recent read-out on Early College is showing that Early College programs, like Bristol’s CollegeTrax, are having a positive impact on student success. In 2021, 4,200 Massachusetts Early College students are projected to earn 25,000 credits, saving \$5.4 million on tuition and fees. Half of these students identify as Latinx, close to one in five as black and 45% are from low-income families.

The study also found that students taking part in Massachusetts’ Early College programs are enrolling in college at 20% higher rates than their peers and that Early College is helping students keep their college goals during the current pandemic. As an indication, as of May 1, 2020, Massachusetts Early College students had completed a FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) form at an 11% percent higher rate than their peers.

“Decades of practice and research in states across the country have shown Early College to be highly effective at increasing

degree completion and earnings. Bristol Community College is a pioneer of Early College in Bristol County and CollegeTrax comes at a most opportune time,” said Marjorie Ringrose, Senior Program Officer, Richard and Susan Smith Family Foundation. “Combining engaging course content and academic supports remotely, CollegeTrax will help high school students follow their college and career dreams at a time when COVID-related stresses may have them questioning whether those dreams are achievable.”

For New Bedford students, the college’s innovative CollegeTrax program begins with an engaging free course, Diversity Expressions in Society. The course was developed specifically for the initiative to engage high school students’ interest in college-level studies and themes of anti-racism, gender equality, LGBTQIA+ rights, workers’ rights and environmental justice through art, media and literature. To provide flexibility for students managing responsibilities, the program will be offered fully online without specific meeting dates or times but with weekly course assignments to stay on track. Students are supported throughout with access to the college’s tutoring services, academic advising staff and virtual office hours to connect one-on-one with their instructors.

“The CollegeTrax program removes barriers for students by removing the cost of courses, books and scheduling barriers that may prevent students without the support or resources from continuing their path toward a college degree,” said Andrew Woodward, Director of Guidance, Fall River Public Schools. “The collaboration between Bristol and B.M.C. Durfee High School focuses on the individual student at all academic levels with the support needed to build the skills and confidence to be successful in the future.”

The courses offered through CollegeTrax were designed so that students can easily transfer their completed credits to Bristol or any Massachusetts public 4-year institution to

continue their academic journey to post-secondary success.

A privately donor-funded initiative, the first CollegeTrax courses began on Monday, October 5, and will run until Friday, December 18, 2020. Registration for Bristol's new CollegeTrax initiative began on Monday, September 28, and is open to all high school students in Fall River and New Bedford public schools.

This program is the latest of Bristol Community College's initiatives to foster a college-going culture in the regions it serves. In recent years, the college has launched several programs to promote inclusive college education for all including "Family Nights," celebrating and serving traditionally underrepresented populations such as Black and African American, Latino, Asian, Portuguese and Women of Color Family Night. The college has also increased the presence and offerings of its dedicated Multicultural Student Center, Women's Center, Veterans Center and Health Center to best support students' goals of obtaining a college degree.

For more information about Bristol Community College's CollegeTrax program, please visit www.bristolcc.edu/collegetrax .

Massachusetts man sentenced to decade in prison for child rape and sexual assault of

intellectually disabled pre-teen

A 25-year-old Mansfield man who sexually assaulted a pre-teen family member and an intellectually disabled family member was sentenced on Tuesday to serve eight to ten years in state prison, Bristol County District Attorney Thomas M. Quinn III announced.

Daniel Gringas pleaded guilty in Fall River Superior Court to indictments charging him with two counts of rape of a child, two counts of indecent assault and battery on a person under 14, two counts of indecent assault and battery on a person over 14, one count of rape and one count of indecent assault and battery on a person with an intellectual disability.

The incidents took place in Mansfield between May of 2015 and February of 2018.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant District Attorney Jennifer Thomspen and the state prison sentence was imposed by Judge Raffi Yessayan.

"The defendant took advantage of his relationship with the victims to sexually abuse both of them. They were young and vulnerable and the defendant violated their trust by repeatedly molesting them. The facts are very disturbing and the sentence is well deserved," District Attorney Quinn said.

In addition to the state prison term, Judge Yessayan also ordered the defendant to 10 years of supervised probation, which will commence upon his release from prison.

The special condition of probation include:

a) The defendant shall attend sex offender treatment as directed by the Probation Officer and as ordered by the court,

at a program approved by the Probation Department, and shall remain in treatment unless and until professionally discharged by the approved sex offender therapist;

b) The Defendant shall provide the Probation Department with signed releases as to any therapy/treatment he attends throughout the term of Probation;

c) The defendant shall not reside in a household with minor children or individuals with intellectual disabilities;

d) The defendant shall have no unsupervised contact with minor children or individuals with intellectual disabilities.

e) The defendant shall have no supervised contact with minor children or individuals with intellectual disabilities unless and until the supervisor has been approved in advance by the Probation Officer and informed by Probation Officer of the offense for which the defendant is on probation and of any other sexual offense for which the defendant has been found guilty.

f) The defendant shall not be employed in a job that puts him into contact with minor children or individuals with intellectual disabilities on a regular basis and all employment must be approved in advance by the Probation Officer.

g) The defendant shall not perform volunteer activities that put him into contact with children or individuals with intellectual disabilities on a regular basis and all volunteer activities must be approved in advance by the Probation Officer.

h) The defendant shall not date any parent of a minor child without permission from the Probation Officer and, if permission is granted, said individual must be informed by the Probation Officer of the offense for which the defendant is on probation and of any other sexual offense for which the

defendant has been found guilty.

i) The defendant shall comply with his legal obligations to register with the Sex Offender Registry Board.

j) The defendant shall have no contact, directly or indirectly with the victims (commencing immediately).

k) GPS for duration of probation (exclusion zones: residences of victims).

Illegal firearm seized, Roxbury man arrested after running over Boston Police officer

At about 7:10 PM on Tuesday, November 10, 2020, officers assigned to the Youth Violence Strike Force, while on a firearm investigation in the area of Berkeley Street and Gray Street in the South End, attempted to conduct a traffic stop of a motor vehicle being operated by the suspect known to them.

As the suspect came to a stop, officers exited their cruiser and approached the motor vehicle on foot. Upon seeing officers' approach, the suspect immediately drove around the police cruisers, accelerated in an attempt to flee and struck an officer with the motor vehicle causing a non-life-threatening injury to the officers' arm. As the vehicle fled a black handgun was thrown from the vehicle and safely recovered by officers.

The passenger of the motor vehicle, later identified as Tarik Wright, 23, of Roxbury, was located several minutes later in the area of Brimmer Street, Downtown. The driver and the vehicle could not be located. The officers will seek charges in Boston Municipal Court against the suspect for multiple offenses.

Tarik Wright was arrested and charged with Unlawful Possession of a Firearm. He is expected to be arraigned in Boston Municipal Court.

Massachusetts State Trooper chase unknown male after he goes wrong-way on turnpike; strikes ambulance

At 3:05 AM a Trooper on patrol on the Massachusetts Turnpike in Brighton observed a vehicle being operated the wrong way, west on the eastbound side. The vehicle was also traveling at an excessive speed and weaving between lanes, and traffic was light at that time.

The Trooper initially reversed direction and followed the vehicle on the eastbound side in an attempt to catch up to the driver and signal him to cease operation.

Upon the Trooper's catching up to the operator, the operator refused to stop. Troop H Headquarters ordered the Trooper to not pursue the suspect or follow on the eastbound side. The Trooper immediately acknowledged the order and complied.

The suspect vehicle, a Nissan Versa, continued to travel west on the eastbound side for three more minutes, covering an additional distance of approximately three miles, with no Troopers in pursuit.

Simultaneously, several Troopers were off at the Natick Service Plaza on the eastbound side for a prior call for a man in possession of a firearm.

Those Troopers were notified of the wrong-way operator approaching their position. A Trooper deployed stop sticks across the eastbound lane from the edge of the Service Plaza.

The suspect vehicle hit the stop sticks and traveled for another approximately 12 seconds before striking the ambulance. After the crash Troopers at the Service Plaza immediately rendered emergency medical aid to all victims.

The Vital Ambulance personnel involved in the crash, who suffered minor injuries and were transported to Massachusetts General Hospital, are a 45-year-old male and a 38-year-old male.

The ambulance passenger, a 49-year-old female, was the subject of a non-critical transport at the time of the crash. She was transported to Tufts Medical Center with minor injuries.

The wrong-way operator, an adult male, was transported to MGH with serious injuries and remains in critical condition. He had no identification on him at the time of the crash and we are working to confirm his suspected identity.

We expect to summons him to face criminal charges; the specific offenses will be determined by the ongoing investigation. The suspect vehicle had a license plate belonging to another vehicle attached to it.

The facts and circumstances of the incident, including why the suspect was traveling the on the wrong side of the highway, as

well as where he got onto the highway, remain under investigation by Troop H of the Massachusetts State Police with assistance from the State Police Collision Analysis and Reconstruction Section and the State Police Crime Scene Services Section.

2,000+ new COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations above 600 in Massachusetts

Colin A. Young
State House News Service

Another 2,047 cases of the coronavirus and 21 COVID-19 deaths were added to the state's grand totals Tuesday as the percent of tests that come back positive for the virus continues to climb.

The Department of Public Health's report for Tuesday increased the total case count to 169,976 infections and elevated the virus's death toll here to 10,184 people with confirmed or probable COVID-19. The seven-day weighted average of the positive test rate stands at 2.63 percent, up from 2.35 percent Monday. If repeat testing from higher education institutions is left out of the equation, the positive test rate would be 4.42 percent, DPH said.

The number of people with COVID-19 who are hospitalized increased by 30 and stood at 618 as of midday Tuesday. Gov. Charlie Baker said Tuesday that the state's COVID-19 trends are headed in the "wrong direction and show no signs of changing." DPH estimated Tuesday that there are 23,702 active

cases of the highly-infectious coronavirus in Massachusetts.

Massachusetts State Troopers Arrest Man with Stolen Gun, Drugs

Just before 11 p.m. on Sunday Trooper Nathan Robitaille, assigned to State Police-Middleboro, was on patrol traveling on Dean Street in Taunton. As he was passing through the intersection of Honorable Gordon M. Owen Riverway he observed a blue Infinity sedan operating erratically at a high rate of speed. Trooper Robitaille caught up to the vehicle and activated his cruiser's blue lights and siren, signaling it to pull over.

Upon the vehicle coming to a full stop Trooper Robitaille made contact with the operator, identified as MANNDELL CURRY, 20, of Dorchester. Trooper Robitaille quickly detected the odor of marijuana and observed paraphernalia loosely sitting in the vehicle. CURRY informed the Trooper that he had a large amount of marijuana in the vehicle and gestured to a backpack. When Trooper Robitaille looked toward the backpack he observed a firearm magazine sitting in a front open pocket. CURRY does not possess a license to carry firearms. Trooper Robitaille instructed CURRY to exit the vehicle and continued to investigate.

After a search of the vehicle Trooper Robitaille located a Smith & Wesson pistol along with approximately two ounces of marijuana, a scale, numerous empty plastic baggies, and more than \$3,200 in cash. Additionally, it was discovered on scene that the Smith & Wesson's serial number had been tampered

with. Once Trooper Robitaille was able to conduct an electronic inquiry on the serial number he discovered it was stolen from Alabama.

CURRY was placed under arrest and transported to the Middleboro Barracks for booking. A bail commissioner was contacted at set bail at \$3,000. He was scheduled to be arraigned at Taunton District Court on the following offenses:

1. Possession of a Firearm without FID Card;
 2. Improper Storage of a Firearm;
 3. Possession of Ammunition without FID Card;
 4. Receiving Stolen Property -\$1200;
 5. Possession of a Class D Drug with Intent to Distribute;
 6. Marked Lanes Violation; and
 7. Fail to Signal.
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New Bedford Police seize firearm after traffic stop

A Nov. 10 traffic stop led NBPD Patrol Officers to seize a Sig Sauer P250-22 (.22 caliber pistol) near the intersection of Scott and Crapo streets.

As a result of the stop, vehicle passenger Davante Cromwell, 21, 9 Bedford St., Apt. #27, was charged with several firearms offences. Cromwell, who attempted to hide his name when questioned, is a validated gang member with previous firearms conviction.

Another passenger, Jean E. Neves, 23, 318 Purchase St., Apt. #1, was arrested on an outstanding warrant. Officers N.J. Almeida and Matthew Sylvia made the arrests.

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



New Bedford Police

**NOTICE: City of New Bedford
trash/recycling pick-up delay
for Veterans Day**



Notice

**City of New Bedford
Solid Waste, Recycling & Yard Waste Holiday Schedule**

**Veterans Day
Wednesday, November 11, 2020**

Residential Collection, Bulky, and White Goods

Wednesday 11/11/20 Holiday-No Collection

If your normal pick up day is **Wednesday**, it will be picked up on **Thursday, 11/12/20**.

If your normal pick up day is **Thursday**, it will be picked up on **Friday, 11/13/20**

If your normal pick up day is **Friday**, it will be picked up on **Saturday, 11/14/20**

Commercial Collection

All Commercial Trash & Cardboard Routes will be running on schedule.