

New Bedford passes 1,000 COVID-19 cases, reaches 30 deaths on Saturday

New Bedford officials reported one more COVID-19 related deaths since yesterday or 11 deaths since last Saturday bringing the total to 30 in the city.

Mayor Jon Mitchell's office reported 98 additional confirmed COVID-19 cases in New Bedford on Saturday, bringing the total positive cases in the city to 1,042, **up from 944 on Friday.**

As of Thursday, none of the 26 people who have died from COVID-19 in New Bedford were under 50 years old and 98% of those who have died in Massachusetts have had at least one preexisting health condition. New Bedford's breakout by age **here.**

26 additional cases of COVID-19 have been identified in Fall River. This brings the total in Fall River to 711. The City was also notified of its twelfth fatality. Full details **here.**

On May 8, the Massachusetts Public Health Department reported that the state added 1,612 more positive cases of COVID-19 bringing to total to 75,333. This is a decrease from **Thursday's 1,696 reported cases.** Full details **here.**

The numbers that state health officials report each day keep going up and up and up. The number of people tested for the coronavirus, the number of people who have been diagnosed with COVID-19, the number of people who have been killed by the virus. There's another number that does not get reported but also keeps rising – the number of people in Massachusetts who have recovered from COVID-19. Full details **here.**

A federal judge will temporarily lift a Gov. Charlie Baker

executive order requiring firearm retailers to close their physical businesses during the COVID-19 state of emergency. Full details [here](#).

Gov. Charlie Baker lifted the ban on golfing in Massachusetts. Full details [here](#).

New Bedford High School announces dates for Class of 2020 events

New Bedford High School has announced dates for virtual and traditional ceremonies for the Class of 2020. A Virtual Commencement Ceremony will stream on Thursday, June 18, 2020 – the date also marks the final day of the school year. The virtual ceremony will include city and school officials, student speakers, music and recognition of achievements.

In addition, a traditional Graduation Ceremony at Walsh Field is being planned for Thursday, August 13, 2020 at 7:00 p.m., said Headmaster Bernadette Coelho. “There’s no question how heartbreaking and disappointing this has been for the Class of 2020 and not how anyone expected their culminating semester to unfold. The entire faculty and staff is, to the best of our ability, committed to providing our graduates with a memorable and fitting send-off, honoring and celebrating their incredible accomplishments.”

Superintendent Thomas Anderson stated “I share in the disappointment that this situation has caused for all students, but especially for our seniors. I wholeheartedly support Ms. Coelho’s efforts in doing what it takes to make

the 2020 ceremony more special than ever as we celebrate the contributions and the legacy of this graduating class.”

A Virtual Awards Night Ceremony will be held during the week of June 15 – the date and time to be announced shortly.

In advance of these ceremonies, the high school will issue a schedule for students to pick up their caps and gowns.

Other milestone events are also planned to be rescheduled; the Senior Prom and the National Honor Society Induction Ceremony are expected to be held in the fall of 2020, the dates and times to be announced. The August 13 event is subject to approval for assembly by municipal and health authorities.

Forever Paws Animal Shelter’s “Barrett” gets a forever home after 15 long weeks in the shelter

“Congratulations to BARRETT!!! He has started his new leash on life! After 15 very long weeks at the shelter, he has finally been adopted.

We want to say “Thank You!” to each and every one of you who shared his videos and post, and a HUGE “Thank You” to New Bedford Guide and Fall River Reporter, for sharing him in our streams but also taking him out and showcasing him outside the shelter environment. We are so grateful.

Thank You so much to his adopters for taking a chance on this VERY deserving shelter dog! We wish you all the very best.”

–Forever Paws Animal Shelter.



COVID-19 cases pass 75,000 in

Massachusetts

Massachusetts Coronavirus Update



On May 8, the Massachusetts Public Health Department reported that the state added 1,612 more positive cases of COVID-19 bringing to total to 75,333. This is a decrease from **Thursday's 1,696 reported cases.**

150 new COVID-19 related deaths were reported on Friday bringing the total deaths in Massachusetts to 4,702. As of 4 pm today, 366,023 people in Massachusetts have been tested for COVID-19 – 14,391 new tests since yesterday.

As of May 5, 32,019 individuals in Massachusetts were subject to quarantine with 22,148 no longer in quarantine. 9,871 individuals are undergoing monitoring/under quarantine.

A federal judge will temporarily lift a Gov. Charlie Baker executive order requiring firearm retailers to close their physical businesses during the COVID-19 state of emergency. Full details **here.**

New Bedford Coronavirus Update

New Bedford officials reported three more COVID-19 related deaths since yesterday, six in the past two days or 10 deaths since Saturday bringing the total to 29 in the city. 29% of New Bedford's COVID-19 related deaths have come in the past six days.

Mayor Jon Mitchell's office reported 53 additional confirmed COVID-19 cases in New Bedford on Friday, bringing the total positive cases in the city to 944, **up from 891 on Thursday.**

As of Thursday, none of the 26 people who have died from COVID-19 in New Bedford were under 50 years old and 98% of

those who have died in Massachusetts have had at least one preexisting health condition. New Bedford's breakout by age [here](#).

Fall River Coronavirus Update

26 additional cases of COVID-19 have been identified in Fall River. This brings the total in Fall River to 711. The City was also notified of its twelfth fatality. Full details [here](#).

Fairhaven Police Department seeks public's help in identifying suspect

"Let's put an end to this person's criminal activity!

She has been cashing large sum fraudulent checks and we need to identify her. She may work in a local hospital and is believed to be in New Bedford area. Share away! Thank you in advance and stay well!

Please email Detective Guerreiro at Janis.Guerreiro@fairhavenpolice.org or call 508-997-7421 and leave a message if you know who this woman is. "-Fairhaven Police Department.



Dominican national sentenced for stealing \$29,800 in MassHealth, SNAP benefits

A Dominican national was sentenced Thursday in federal court in Boston in connection with making fraudulent statements on a passport application and an application for MassHealth benefits.

Hidel Romero Sanchez, 42, a Dominican national residing in Dorchester, was sentenced by U.S. District Court Judge Denise J. Casper to time served (approximately 14 months in prison), 18 months of supervised release, and ordered to pay forfeiture and restitution of \$26,000 to MassHealth and \$3,800 to Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance. In January 2020, Romero Sanchez pleaded guilty to making a false statement on a passport application and a false statement on an application for MassHealth benefits.

Romero Sanchez admitted to using the identification of a U.S.

citizen to obtain a Connecticut driver's license, a U.S. passport, MassHealth benefits, Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, and subsidized housing benefits. He also admitted to using this false identity in employment documents, including when submitting a criminal record check form for a job at a local children's hospital, and thus hiding prior cocaine trafficking charges that were pending under his true name.

United States Attorney Andrew E. Lelling and Michael Shea, Acting Special Agent in Charge of Homeland Security Investigations in Boston, made the announcement. Assistant U.S. Attorney Bill Abely of Lelling's Major Crimes Unit prosecuted the case. Fraudulently Applying for Passport and MassHealth Benefits.

65,733 people in Massachusetts have survived COVID-19

Colin A. Young
State House News Service

The numbers that state health officials report each day keep going up and up and up. The number of people tested for the coronavirus, the number of people who have been diagnosed with COVID-19, the number of people who have been killed by the virus. There's another number that does not get reported but also keeps rising – the number of people in Massachusetts who have recovered from COVID-19.

"People can and do recover, and we need to remember that,"

Public Health Commissioner Monica Bharel said late last month after she recovered from her own COVID-19 diagnosis and returned to work.

There have been 73,721 cases of COVID-19 confirmed in Massachusetts since Feb. 1. As of Thursday, 4,552 people have died of the disease and another 3,436 people are currently hospitalized with the virus. That leaves 65,733 people who could be sick with the virus but not badly enough to need hospital care, could have been treated at a hospital and released, or could have made a full recovery like Bharel.

A COVID-19 simulator built by Massachusetts General Hospital estimates that the number of active cases of COVID-19 in Massachusetts – meaning “anyone who is in the infectious period” – is roughly 6,200. But there is no real way to know for sure yet.

Clinicians in Massachusetts are required to report positive cases of COVID-19, but are not required to report when a patient recovers and the Mass. Department of Public Health does not track the number of recoveries in the state, a DPH spokeswoman said.

Many local boards of health do track the number of COVID-19 recoveries in their own communities. Boston said Thursday that 2,882 of the 10,589 residents who have been diagnosed with COVID-19 have recovered. Somerville reported 291 recoveries among 665 positive tests in its city. Framingham reports the total number of cases (1,146 as of Wednesday) and then breaks it down into fatalities (42), recoveries (290) and active cases (814). Pittsfield does the same. Brockton reports the cumulative number of confirmed cases, the number of deaths and the number of active cases, making it easy to determine the number of people who have recovered.

A number of states around the country report statewide recovery numbers daily or weekly, too. But things get murky in

the fine print of each state's report.

"Currently, there are multiple ways for recovered cases to be recorded and several methods are used by different countries and states. Some states and countries measure a case as recovered when a person has had COVID-19 for more than 14 days, while others upon hospital discharge data – neither of which completely capture recovery of the full COVID positive population," the Florida Department of Health, which like Massachusetts does not report statewide recoveries, said in a statement.

To cut through some of that static, Massachusetts is among a group of states talking with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and each other about coming up with a standardized definition of what it means to have recovered from COVID-19, DPH confirmed to the News Service.

Alaska's Department of Health and Social Services publishes a chart that visually displays the number of cumulative cases along with how many of those are active, how many patients have died and how many people have recovered. The chart shows that while the cumulative number of cases increases, so too does the number of recoveries.

As of Wednesday, Alaska reported that about 78 percent of people who have tested positive in that state have recovered. The state defines a recovered patient as someone "whose symptoms have improved enough to meet the CDC criteria to be released from home isolation, and are no longer considered to be infectious."

Michigan reports a cumulative number of people who have recovered from COVID-19 infection each Saturday. Last weekend, the state said 15,659 of the 44,397 people who had been diagnosed with the virus had recovered, about 35 percent of all cases.

There, public health officials count as recovered any COVID-19

patient who is still alive 30 days after testing positive for the virus.

On Sunday, Texas Gov. Greg Abbott tweeted that more people in his state had recovered from COVID-19 than had been newly diagnosed with it over the last two days.

"That's exactly what we want to see," the governor wrote. "Texas ranks 3rd highest among states for number of people who have recovered from #coronavirus."

In Abbott's state, the Department of State Health Services reports daily on the number of cumulative COVID-19 cases in the state, and estimated numbers of active cases and of patients who have recovered from the virus.

But the fine print on the state's COVID-19 dashboard reveals that the estimates are "based on several assumptions related to hospitalization rates and recovery times, which were informed by data available to date" and that the estimates "are subject to change as we learn more about COVID-19." The estimates also do not include any cases reported before March 24.

Tennessee, which got its first COVID-19 case from Massachusetts, reports recoveries and counts in that category "people who (1) have been confirmed to be asymptomatic by their local or regional health department and have completed their required isolation period or (2) are at least 21 days beyond the first test confirming their illness."

As of Tuesday, Tennessee reported that 6,783 people had recovered from COVID-19, representing about 48 percent of the state's cumulative cases.

Mississippi public health officials put out a number for "presumed recovered cases," which is a count of all living COVID-19 patients who were not hospitalized and are 14 days beyond their initial positive test, plus the number of

patients who were hospitalized but are 21 days beyond their initial positive test.

In Wyoming, a patient is considered recovered “when there is resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications and there is improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g. cough, shortness of breath) for 72 hours AND at least 7 days have passed since symptoms first appeared.”

Having a uniform definition of what it means to have recovered from this new virus could play a major role as states reopen their economies and send people back to work. Some have suggested that people who have recovered could return to work sooner or could be asked to take frontline jobs in medicine or retail, if studies show that recovery from COVID-19 comes with some level of immunity from re-infection. But that all hinges on knowing what recovered actually means.

“We’ve asked the CDC this question so we don’t all define it in different ways just based on the state,” North Carolina Health and Human Services Secretary Mandy Cohen said in an April 16 news conference. “We’re trying to figure out how we as a country can all define recovery so we have that sort of standardization and not apples to oranges if we define it in different ways.”

**FDA Authorizes First
Diagnostic Test Using At-Home
Collection of Saliva**

Specimens

Today, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration authorized the first diagnostic test with the option of using home-collected saliva samples for COVID-19 testing. Specifically, the FDA issued an emergency use authorization (EUA) to Rutgers Clinical Genomics Laboratory for their COVID-19 laboratory developed test (LDT), which had been previously added to the high complexity molecular-based LDT “umbrella” EUA, to permit testing of samples self-collected by patients at home using the Spectrum Solutions LLC SDNA-1000 Saliva Collection Device. This announcement builds on last month’s EUA for the first diagnostic test with a home-collection option, which uses a sample collected from the patient’s nose with a nasal swab and saline.

“Authorizing additional diagnostic tests with the option of at-home sample collection will continue to increase patient access to testing for COVID-19. This provides an additional option for the easy, safe and convenient collection of samples required for testing without traveling to a doctor’s office, hospital or testing site,” said FDA Commissioner Stephen M. Hahn, M.D. “We will continue to work around the clock to support the development of accurate and reliable tests, as we have done throughout this pandemic. The FDA has authorized more than 80 COVID-19 tests and adding more options for at-home sample collection is an important advancement in diagnostic testing during this public health emergency.”

Today’s EUA for Rutgers Clinical Genomics Laboratory’s molecular test permits testing of a saliva sample collected from the patient using a designated self-collection kit. Once patients collect their saliva sample, they return it to the Rutgers Clinical Genomics Laboratory in a sealed package for testing.

The Rutgers Clinical Genomics Laboratory test is currently the

only authorized COVID-19 diagnostic test that uses saliva samples to test for SARS-CoV-2, the strain of coronavirus that causes COVID-19. The test remains prescription only.

Today's authorization is limited to testing performed at the Rutgers Clinical Genomics Laboratory using their molecular LDT COVID-19 authorized test for saliva specimens collected using the Spectrum Solutions LLC SDNA-1000 Saliva Collection Device. It is important to note that this is not a general authorization for at-home collection of patient samples using other collection methods, saliva collection devices, or tests, or for tests fully conducted at home.

New Bedford seize handgun, arrest man for carjacking and armed robbery

On May 7, New Bedford Police Gang Unit detectives seized a Glock 45 caliber handgun with four rounds of ammunition while arresting a suspect for carjacking and armed robbery on April 30.

26-year old Ramon Martinez-Colon of 31 Crapo Street was charged with armed robbery, assault, and firearms offenses.

Chief Joseph Cordeiro commended the OCIB, Gang Unit and Detective Division for its proactive policing. "Despite the additional issues relating to the pandemic, officers continue to go after those who threaten the safety of our city. Their work is exceptional during ordinary times and extraordinary during these times," said Cordeiro.

Detective Bruce Szyndlar was the arresting officer.

If you have any information on criminal activity in your community, 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.

Massachusetts fishing industry in line for \$28 million in federal aid

Michael P. Norton
State House News Service

Massachusetts will receive \$28 million in fisheries assistance under CARES Act allocations announced Thursday by the federal government, and efforts are ongoing to deliver more aid to an industry that officials say has been hit hard by impacts of the COVID-19 crisis.

Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross allocated \$300 million in nationwide assistance, saying the Trump administration “stands with the men and women working to provide healthy and safe seafood during this uniquely challenging time.”

The fisheries support 1.7 million jobs and generate \$200 billion in annual sales, he said. Only Alaska and Washington, which are each in line for \$50 million in aid, received larger allocations than Massachusetts. Maine received the fifth largest allocation, at \$20.3 million.

A senior NOAA Fisheries official said the funds will be disbursed “quickly and effectively.”

Spending plans will be developed by NOAA Fisheries working with interstate marine fishery commissions, and the plans must describe the main categories for funding, including direct payments, fishery-related infrastructure, and fishery-related education to address direct and indirect COVID-19 impacts.

Applicants may include commercial fishermen, charter businesses, aquaculture operations, processors, and other fishery-related businesses, according to NOAA Fisheries. "Once a spend plan has been approved by NOAA, the agency anticipates that the three Commissions will review applications and process payments to eligible fishery participants on behalf of the states and territories. The states will have the option to process payments themselves."

The commerce department noted that vessel repair businesses, restaurants and seafood retailers are not considered "fishery-related businesses."

There's a standard for applying for assistance and each state partner will be required to determine how to verify which applicants meet the threshold of economic revenue losses greater than 35 percent as compared to the prior five-year average, according to NOAA. The timing of funds disbursement will vary, the agency said, and will occur on a rolling basis and without the need for the secretary to first declare a disaster.

NOAA also announced Thursday that President Donald Trump signed an executive order to help grow the fishing industry.

USDA Seafood Purchasing

Earlier this week, members of the Massachusetts Congressional delegation applauded a U.S. Department of Agriculture decision to include Atlantic seafood in so-called Section 32 program food purchases made available in part by the \$2.2 trillion CARES Act approved in late March.

Massachusetts officials said the federal program has historically overlooked East Coast seafood, but has agreed to purchase \$20 million in Atlantic haddock, pollock, and redfish to help East Coast seafood producers.

Congressman William Keating said the purchases “will not only help to support our fishing industry during these trying times, but will also provide highly nutritious, sustainable food for families in need across the nation.” U.S. Rep. Seth Moulton added, “Fishermen are hurting. Things were already tough because of the trade war and they got a lot tougher when restaurants closed because of the pandemic. Government’s strength is measured by its ability to serve the people it represents. I hope this brings new business and peace of mind to America’s fishermen.”

Sens. Elizabeth Warren and Ed Markey and about two dozen of their colleagues are pressing for more fishing industry aid in the next potential COVID-19 relief law. In a letter on Wednesday to Senate leaders, the senators wrote that while many agricultural sectors “have seen a significant increase in grocery sales, seafood has been left out of that economic upside, as stores have cut back on offerings.”

Citing reports that many of the nation’s fisheries lost 95 percent of their sales, the senators said efforts to limit the spread of COVID-19 have led to a “near total shutdown” of restaurants and outlets that serve fresh seafood and the supply chain of fishermen and seafood processors has been “decimated.

The senators asked that the next relief bill include at least \$2 billion for the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s seafood purchases and authorization for the purchased products to be distributed to local, state, and national non-profits on the frontlines of hunger relief efforts.

“The seafood industry is currently facing an unprecedented

collapse in demand because of the novel coronavirus,” the senators wrote in their letter. “We urge you to facilitate the government purchase of seafood products that would both ensure stability in this key sector and provide healthy, domestically produced food for Americans.