

Baker Administration, Mass League of Community Health Centers to Launch Public Awareness Campaign

In partnership with the Mass League of Community Health Centers, the Baker-Polito Administration today announced an upcoming new COVID-19 public awareness campaign, "New Tools, New Rules – Same Great Care."

Community Health Centers throughout the Commonwealth are open and accepting patients, and this campaign encourages residents to continue to seek care for their medical conditions and reminds individuals not to delay treatment as a result of the COVID-19 public health emergency.

In addition to implementing additional, onsite safety protocols, many Community Health Centers have introduced and expanded telehealth care options. Furthermore, MassHealth contracts with three telehealth providers to offer additional support for members with questions about symptoms that might be related to COVID-19.

Featuring diverse patients with common conditions such as asthma, diabetes and pregnancy, these ads will run for free on WCVB in the Greater Boston area and on WWLP-22News and The CW Springfield in Western Massachusetts.

Digital video advertisements on Facebook will be in English, Spanish and other languages, and will specifically target regions with the highest populations of families in need of services.

Last week, the Baker-Polito Administration announced an expansion of its initiative to boost testing in community

health centers across the Commonwealth.

The Baker-Polito Administration will continue to update the public on developments related to COVID-19. Residents can visit www.mass.gov/covid19 for the latest information, call 2-1-1 with questions, and subscribe to text-alerts by texting "COVIDMA" or "COVIDMAESP" (for Spanish alerts) to 888-777.

Dominican national sentenced to time served for fentanyl distribution in Lawrence

A Dominican national previously residing in Lawrence pleaded guilty and was sentenced Thursday for distributing fentanyl.

Steven de Jesus de Leon Trinidad, 22, pleaded guilty during a videoconference hearing to distribution of fentanyl. U.S. District Judge Leo T. Sorokin then sentenced de Leon Trinidad to time served (approximately 11 months in prison) and three years of supervised release. De Leon Trinidad will face deportation proceedings.

On June 11, 2019, de Leon Trinidad sold fentanyl to an undercover agent in Lawrence. Law enforcement officers arrested de Leon Trinidad immediately following the sale, and he has been in custody since. A federal grand jury indicted de Leon Trinidad in July 2019.

This case is part of a coordinated enforcement operation in the Merrimack Valley called "Devil's Highway." The operation targeted the distribution of opioids, including fentanyl and heroin, and resulted in charges against a total of 40 people

for federal drug offenses, with at least a dozen more individuals facing state charges.

United States Attorney Andrew Lelling and Joseph R. Bonavolonta, Special Agent in Charge of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Boston Field Division, made the announcement. Assistant U.S. Attorney Lucy Sun of Lelling's Worcester Branch Office prosecuted the case.

FDA Authorizes First Antigen Test to Help in the Rapid Detection of the Virus that Causes COVID-19

The following is attributed to FDA Commissioner Stephen M. Hahn, M.D. and Jeff Shuren, M.D., director of FDA's Center for Devices and Radiological Health

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has issued the first emergency use authorization (EUA) for a COVID-19 antigen test, a new category of tests for use in the ongoing pandemic. These diagnostic tests quickly detect fragments of proteins found on or within the virus by testing samples collected from the nasal cavity using swabs. The EUA was issued late Friday to Quidel Corporation for the Sofia 2 SARS Antigen FIA. This test is authorized for use in high and moderate complexity laboratories certified by Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments (CLIA), as well as for point-of-care testing by facilities operating under a CLIA Certificate of Waiver.

Diagnostic testing is one of the pillars of our nation's

response to COVID-19 and the FDA continues to take actions to help make these critical products available, including by issuing EUAs. During this pandemic, there have been two types of tests for which the FDA has issued EUAs. One type are polymerase chain reaction (PCR) tests, a molecular diagnostic testing technique that detects the genetic material from the virus and can help diagnose an active COVID-19 infection. The other type are serological tests that look for antibodies to the virus, which can help identify individuals who have developed an adaptive immune response to the virus, as part of either an active infection or a prior infection (serological, or antibody, tests should not be used to diagnose active infection).

This latest FDA authorization is for an antigen test, which is a new type of diagnostic test designed for rapid detection of the virus that causes COVID-19. Each category of diagnostic test has its own unique role in the fight against this virus. PCR tests can be incredibly accurate, but running the tests and analyzing the results can take time. One of the main advantages of an antigen test is the speed of the test, which can provide results in minutes. However, antigen tests may not detect all active infections, as they do not work the same way as a PCR test. Antigen tests are very specific for the virus, but are not as sensitive as molecular PCR tests. This means that positive results from antigen tests are highly accurate, but there is a higher chance of false negatives, so negative results do not rule out infection. With this in mind, negative results from an antigen test may need to be confirmed with a PCR test prior to making treatment decisions or to prevent the possible spread of the virus due to a false negative.

Antigen tests are also important in the overall response against COVID-19 as they can generally be produced at a lower cost than PCR tests and once multiple manufacturers enter the market, can potentially scale to test millions of Americans per day due to their simpler design, helping our country

better identify infection rates closer to real time.

This is just the first antigen test to be authorized and we expect more to follow. We also anticipate providing an EUA template for antigen tests, similar to ones we've released for other test types, to help manufacturers streamline submissions and help expedite our review and issuance of additional EUAs.

Antigen tests will play a critical role in the fight against COVID-19 and we will continue to offer support and expertise to help with the development of accurate tests, and to review and monitor marketed tests to ensure accuracy, while balancing the urgent need for these critical diagnostics.

Off-Duty Wareham Police officer races into burning building to check for occupants; rescues dog

On Friday, May 8, at about 4:05 p.m. Wareham Police Communications Officers Nicolle Amaral and Scott McDaniel began receiving multiple 911 calls reporting a fire on Cranberry Highway near McDonald's restaurant. Onset Fire Department was notified and Wareham Police officers responded to assist.

Officer Christopher Corner had just left the police station, was off-duty, and observed the smoke in the sky while traveling on Cranberry Highway. Officer Corner determined that a home was on fire in the Silver Lake Mobile Home Park and observed neighbors who had forced open a door. He immediately

responded by entering the burning building to check for occupants, and in the process located a dog that was safely removed.

In addition, Officer Corner was able to provide incoming emergency responders updated information by radio. Additional police officers responded, assisting fire personnel and redirecting traffic.

Chief of Police John Walcek said, "Chris jumped into action even after working a double shift on patrol. He is an excellent police officer who gives 100 percent all of the time."

The dog was returned to the owner unharmed.

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.