

# Governor Baker extends non-essential business closures in Massachusetts to May 18th

Today, the Baker-Polito Administration extended the essential services emergency order to May 18th and launched a Reopening Advisory Board that will produce a plan to the Governor by May 18th. The Administration also announced that the Department of Public Health's Stay At Home Advisory remains in effect and gatherings of 10 or more people remain prohibited until May 18th.

**Essential Services Order:** Governor Charlie Baker's emergency order requiring that all businesses and organizations that do not provide "COVID-19 Essential Services" close their physical workplaces and facilities to workers, customers and the public will be extended until May 18th. Businesses and organizations not on the list of essential services are encouraged to continue operations through remote means that do not require workers, customers, or the public to enter or appear at the brick-and-mortar premises closed by the order. This order also extends the existing ban on gatherings of more than 10 people until May 18th.

**Stay at Home Advisory:** Governor Charlie Baker announced that the Department of Public Health's stay-at-home advisory will remain in effect. Residents are strongly urged to stay home and avoid unnecessary travel and other unnecessary person to person contact during this time period. Residents who are considered at high risk when exposed to COVID-19 should limit social interactions with other people as much as possible.

**Executive Branch Employee Guidance:** The Baker-Polito Administration today also extended the guidance issued to Executive Branch employees on protocol during the COVID-19

outbreak to ensure state government can continue to provide key services while protecting the health and safety of the public and the Executive Branch workforce. Under the guidance, all employees performing non-core functions who are able to work remotely should continue to do so until May 18th.

**Reopening Advisory Board:** Today, Governor Baker announced the formation of the Reopening Advisory Board, which will be Co-Chaired by Lt. Governor Karyn Polito and Housing and Economic Development Secretary Mike Kennealy. The Board brings public health officials together with leaders from the business community and municipal government from across the Commonwealth. This group is charged with advising the administration on strategies to reopen the economy in phases based on health and safety metrics. It will meet with key stakeholders and solicit input from a variety of constituencies over the next three weeks to develop a report by May 18th that will include DPH approved workplace safety standards, industry frameworks and customer protocols and guidelines, including enforcement mechanisms and coordination with municipal leaders. This report is due on the 18th, but the administration has made clear that public health data and guidance from health care experts will dictate the timeline of the re-opening process.

The 17-member Advisory Board is composed of three public health officials, including Department of Public Health Commissioner Dr. Monica Bharel, three municipal officials, and eleven leaders from the business community, including MassDOT Secretary and CEO Stephanie Pollack. Members of the Advisory Board bring a range of perspectives to the table, such as an understanding of workplaces and workforces and insights into key areas like financial markets, education, manufacturing and transportation.

Reopening Advisory Board Members:

- Aron Ain, CEO, Kronos Inc & Ultimate Software

- Carlo Zaffanella, Vice President and General Manager, Maritime & Strategic Systems, General Dynamics Mission Systems
  - Corey Thomas, CEO, Rapid 7
  - Daniel Rivera, Mayor, City of Lawrence
  - Rochelle Walensky, MD, MPH, Massachusetts General Hospital
  - Girish Navani, CEO and Co-Founder, eClinicalWorks
  - Joe Bahena, Senior Vice President, Joseph Abboud Manufacturing
  - Kathryn Burton, Chief of Staff, City of Boston
  - Laurie Leshin, Ph.D., President, Worcester Polytechnic Institute
  - Linda Markham, President, Cape Air
  - Mark Keroack, President & CEO, Baystate Health
  - Monica Bharel, Ph.D., Commissioner, Department of Public Health
  - Nicole LaChapelle, Mayor, City of Easthampton
  - Pamela Everhart, Head of Regional Public Affairs and Community Relations, Fidelity Investments
  - Stephanie Pollack, Transportation Secretary and CEO
  - Steve DiFillippo, CEO, Davios Restaurants
  - Wendy Hudson, Owner, Nantucket Book Partners
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# New Bedford reports two more COVID-19 related deaths since Monday

Mayor Jon Mitchell's office Tuesday reported 32 additional confirmed COVID-19 cases in New Bedford, bringing the total positive cases in the city to 535, **up from 503 on Monday**. Two more COVID-19 related deaths were also reported bringing the total to 15 in the city.

According to Mayor Coogan, there are 411 positive cases in Fall River, up 34 from Sunday. Full details **here**.

Sarah Rebello, who co-hosts a conservative radio show in Fall River, organized a rally at Government Center to express what she feels is an unconstitutional lockdown.

On April 27, the Massachusetts Public Health Department reported that the state added 1,590 more positive cases of COVID-19 bringing to total to 56,462. This is a decrease from Sunday 1,590 reported cases. Full details **here**.

The Supreme Judicial Court today issued an updated order, which will be effective May 4, 2020, regarding the operation of Massachusetts state courts and courthouses during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Full details **here**.

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## Town of Acushnet and its

# **first-responders receive donation of two barrels of hand sanitizer**

“Former Acushnet Selectman David Wojnar made arrangements for the donation of two barrels of hand sanitizer that were shipped to town free of charge last week.

One barrel was donated to Fairhaven first responders and the second kept in town for Acushnet’s public safety needs. With enough set aside for our first responders we decided to get the sanitizer into the hands of one important at risk group, our senior citizens.

“But still, how to divvy it up? So, in the same spirit in which we built the 9/11 Memorial nine years ago, we started asking around. It didn’t take long to find some very helpful and resourceful friends.



“First, the Acushnet DPW donated a hand pump used to draw the liquid from the barrel. Next, Evan White of White Brother’s Dairy made arrangements with Hood Milk for 110 brand new one gallon containers. Our own Fire Lieutenant Brian Monte connected us to Mr. Ed Andler of Boston based Andler Packaging Group who provided over 300 eight ounce bottles with caps. Finally, the Acushnet Council on Aging will distribute these bottles of hand sanitizer along with fresh produce to town seniors this Thursday and the Acushnet Housing Authority will deliver bottles to their 60 residents before the end of the week! As additional donations of this important product are received we are in a position to quickly get it out of the fire station and on to the hands of the people who need it most”.

“All of the above was donated! Again, Acushnet (and friends) you rock.

“Fifty-five gallons, to one gallon, to eight ounces. It’s easy when you have friends!” -Acushnet Fire & EMS Department.



# New Bedford's Blue Harvest Fisheries re-opens after "enhanced cleaning and disinfection"

Last Thursday, Blue Harvest Fisheries at 40 Herman Melville Blvd in New Bedford was forced to close its doors by the New Bedford Board of Health after three of its employees tested positive for the COVID-19 virus. The business is now back open.

The "cease and desist" order for the facility hinged upon the "enhanced cleaning and disinfection" of the entire business and a subsequent 3-day waiting period.

The business was quick to respond when they discovered the employees had tested positive for the virus and did not wait for the "cease and desist" order from the City's Board of Health. Instead, they immediately hired an independent, professional, third-party cleaner to perform a thorough disinfecting and cleaning of the entire facility.

In addition, they have enacted a new safety protocol for their staff in the form of incorporating rigorous sanitation, cleaning, and disinfecting procedures, as well as, social distancing practices.

In early April, Walgreens on Kempton Street in New Bedford given cease and desist order. Details [here](#).

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# Somerville to fine people \$300 for not wearing a mask

Katie Lannan

State House News Service

People who “willfully refuse to comply” with a new Somerville order requiring face coverings in public could be subject to a \$300 fine, though Mayor Joe Curtatone said his city’s police, who will enforce the order, “are committed to compassionate policing” and will first aim to educate violators and issue warnings.

The face-covering order will take effect on Wednesday, with a one-week grace period. In an advisory to residents, Curtatone said appropriate face coverings cover the nose and mouth, and can include a scarf, bandana or “any clean cloth.” The order applies to indoor and outdoor public spaces, including stores, shared entrances of multi-unit homes, sidewalks, streets, and paths. Joggers and cyclists must comply. Children under age 2 are exempt.

“Exceptions will be made for persons with certain medical conditions, and we certainly understand that some may struggle to comply, such as persons living with a mental illness or parents trying to keep masks on young children,” the advisory said. “Understanding will be shown in such cases.”

Other municipalities have also adopted policies on face-coverings, including Holyoke, Holbrook, Braintree and Whitman, which require them in essential businesses, and Brookline, which requires them in public places.

Somerville Mayor Joe Curtatone posted the following on Facebook:

“Starting Wednesday, we’re requiring everyone age 2 and up to

wear face coverings in public. If you to make a run to the market, wear a face covering. If you're out for a walk/run/bike ride, wear a face covering. It can be a medical mask or a piece of cloth, just wear a face covering. If you own clothing, you own something that can be used as a face covering.

Our police will be out over the next week making sure the public is educated about the requirement. We understand some people will be unable to wear one or have difficulties with a face mask. We're not looking to issue tickets. We'd rather not. So don't make it an issue and just wear a face covering.

Full details here: <https://www.somervillema.gov/facecoverings>  
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## **Taunton's Gene Hardy Flooring donates lunches to essential workers at Trucchi's**

Last week, the folks at Gene Hardy Flooring ordered lunch for all the employees at both Trucchi's locations in Taunton.

The food was provided by Liberty & Union Ale House, a popular restaurant that's managed to adapt and stay up and running for takeout and delivery. A message on their Facebook page read "We are so grateful to GENE HARDY FLOORING INC. for donating delicious hot lunches from Liberty & Union Ale House to our hardworking team members in both of our Taunton locations. ♥️#YouveGotHeart."

Bravo to the essential employees out there making our lives a

little bit easier and THANK YOU to the businesses supporting them and fighting hard to get through this.

If you want to give a shout out or support any of the businesses mentioned you can visit them here:

**Gene Hardy Flooring:** [facebook.com/GeneHardyFlooring/](https://facebook.com/GeneHardyFlooring/)

**Liberty & Union Ale House:** [facebook.com/LandUAlehouse/](https://facebook.com/LandUAlehouse/)

**Trucchi's Supermarkets:** [facebook.com/trucchis/](https://facebook.com/trucchis/)

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# Massachusetts coalition demands greater response to “Crisis of Inequity”

Colin A. Young

State House News Service

A group of medical providers, academics, and concerned citizens is calling on the governor to do more to address the “racial and economic disparities that have become a defining element of the COVID-19 pandemic” in Massachusetts.

In a press release Monday, the group said that the state’s lack of clear racial or ethnicity data for most of its COVID-19 cases has led to a “crisis of inequity in both treatment and in death.” The group, which includes people employed at Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston Children’s Hospital, Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, Boston Medical Center, Harvard Medical School, and other institutions, is calling itself Massachusetts Healthcare Workers for Equity.

“It has been weeks, and as physicians and healthcare professionals, we have yet to see a comprehensive plan from

Governor Baker that we feel meaningfully addresses the stark COVID-19 disparities that are occurring across Massachusetts,” Dr. Lara Jirmanus, a primary care physician in Revere, said. “The Governor cannot lead from behind on this topic, and he cannot avoid the fact that the state’s response thus far has been totally insufficient for Massachusetts’ communities of color.”

Baker’s administration has ordered the collection of race and ethnicity data for COVID-19 patients, but that information remains missing or unknown for more than half of both the state’s cases and deaths. The administration’s initial guidance on COVID-19 crisis care standards was criticized by lawmakers and others who thought they did not adequately account for health care disparities among communities of color. Those guidelines have been updated, in response to feedback, and several medical experts who helped craft the guidance said it is unlikely the standards will be activated.

While the Massachusetts Healthcare Workers for Equity group acknowledged actions the Baker administration has taken in Chelsea, which emerged as a hotspot for the virus, it also called on the governor to “rapidly increase testing and treatment in working-class communities of color with high rates of infection such as Randolph and Brockton, and to increase funding for community health centers and hospitals in these communities in order to fight COVID19.”

The coalition’s recommendations include “free healthcare for all,” massive production of testing and treatment supplies, a suspension of rent and debt collections to help working-class people to shelter in place, “bailouts for working people, not banks and big businesses,” and “the freeing of all nonviolent prisoners.”

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# Baker: COVID-19 numbers in Massachusetts may be hitting plateau

At the start of an eighth week living under a state of emergency, Gov. Charlie Baker said Monday the data might be starting to show that the coronavirus's spread has "plateaued" as he committed an additional \$130 million to support efforts to fight COVID-19 in nursing homes, where the toll of the pandemic has been particularly harsh.

Baker, however, again said he would have more to say later this week about his thinking on how and when to begin reopening parts of the economy, and Boston Mayor Marty Walsh said in no uncertain terms that May 4 is too early for businesses to invite workers and customers back through their doors.

"I can tell you right now that Boston will not reopen on May 4," Walsh said.

The press briefings from Baker and Walsh came a week before the governor's executive order to close all non-essential businesses during the public health emergency is scheduled to expire on May 4.

Baker described Massachusetts as "still in the surge and very much in the fight." He contrasted the situation in the Northeast with conditions in some other states, particularly across the South, where governors have started to relax stay-at-home advisories.

"The trend data remains reasonably high," Baker said. "But obviously whatever decision we make needs to come with a little thought and a plan behind it, so we'll probably put that out later this week."

Some business groups, including the Mass High Tech Council, have published recommendations for how to reopen that rely on significantly increased testing efforts, which Baker said he supports and is working to implement. Other groups, however, say businesses must be given the chance to show they can protect workers.

"The Federal and State governments have done an admirable job communicating to the public the measures necessary for safe interactions moving forward. Small businesses must be given the opportunity to demonstrate they are willing and capable of re-opening in a responsible and safe manner. That is the only way our state will begin to climb out of the economic disaster it currently finds itself in," said Massachusetts Fiscal Alliance spokesman Paul Craney.

The governor did say he believed Massachusetts had been successful in "flattening the curve," and noted that the number of new hospitalizations on Sunday increased by only 32 from the day before.

"It seems to have plateaued, depending upon which part of Massachusetts you're in, and then the hope and the expectation is it will start to fall, but it will probably fall slowly the same way it ramped up slowly," Baker said.

Baker said long-term care facilities, including the state's 386 nursing homes, have "unfortunately evolved into a national hotspot," with 10,031 confirmed cases of COVID-19 and more than half of the state's deaths from the disease occurring among residents and staff of the facilities.

The administration said that by the end of the week it would make \$130 million in additional funding available for nursing

homes to pay for staff, cleaning and personal protective equipment.

“The numbers are tough to comprehend, but they illustrate the lethal grip COVID-19 can have on seniors, and especially those with underlying health conditions, here in the commonwealth and obviously our deepest condolences go out to the families, loved ones and staff who have been impacted by this horrible virus,” Baker said.

The governor also said the state was assembling a team of 120 nurses and certified nursing assistants to deploy in teams of 10 to facilities in emergency situations, and would be auditing long-term care facilities for compliance with a new set of care criteria, including mandatory testing of staff and residents, a 28-point infection control check-list and adherence to protective equipment requirements.

The money – which comes on top of the \$130 million made available April 15 – will be sent to facilities that can show they’re living up to those safety standards.

“These funds will be allocated to nursing homes that are meeting a benchmark for certain criteria to ensure these privately operated facilities are working as safely as possible,” Baker said at an afternoon press conference from the State House.

Baker said that fighting the “invisible enemy” can be especially challenging in settings like nursing homes where the coronavirus can spread undetected among residents and staff showing no symptoms.

“That makes controlling the disease much harder, and it also demands a new level of infection control and staffing requirements for our nursing homes so that they can create the safest environment possible,” Baker said. “This, of course, is not easy to do, but it’s expected, required and necessary.”

Health and Human Services Secretary Marylou Sudders said the state would also make \$44 million in additional funding available for residential congregate care service providers “to address unplanned, and thus unbudgeted” expenses such as overtime, infection control, cleaning services and personal protective equipment.

The money is in addition to \$94 million made available for residential service providers in late March, and Massachusetts hopes to be reimbursed for 75 percent of the staffing costs by the federal government.

Sudders said state agencies work with 238 different residential service providers to help care for 20,500 individuals, including children and those with intellectual and developmental disabilities, and the state plans to increase its monthly reimbursement to those providers in May and June by an additional 15 percent.

Tim Foley, the executive vice president of 1199 SEIU United Healthcare Workers who was personally thanked by Baker for his help during the press conference, said the increases in funding will lead to “enhanced pay” for caregivers and increased oversight to ensure a safe working environment.

“These actions support nursing home workers who are on the frontlines, brushing aside fear every day, in their fight to stop the spread of the virus and provide care for seniors and people with disabilities,” Foley said in a statement.

SEIU Local 509 President Peter MacKinnon said the rate increases for residential service providers indicate recognition that those care providers are underpaid, despite putting themselves in harm’s way.

“Today’s rate increases are an important reminder of the vital services front line workers provide to serve our community members most in need. There is power in a union, and this announcement shows the strength of all workers in raising



their voices, making their needs known, and fighting for what's right," MacKinnon said.

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# COVID-19 related deaths drops to three-week low in Massachusetts

## Massachusetts Coronavirus Update

On April 27, the Massachusetts Public Health Department reported that the state added 1,524 more positive cases of COVID-19 bringing to total to 56,462. This is a decrease from Sunday 1,590 reported cases.



66 new COVID-19 related deaths were reported on Saturday bringing the total deaths in Massachusetts to 3,003. 66 deaths are the lowest number in three weeks. On Monday cases did rise to 104, but the trend does appear to be downward.



As of 4 pm today, 244,887 people in Massachusetts have been tested for COVID-19 – 8,787 new tests since yesterday.



Gun rights activists staged a demonstration on Cape Cod on Saturday afternoon to protest Gov. Charlie Baker's refusal to include gun shops on the state's list of essential businesses that are allowed to stay open during the coronavirus pandemic. Full details [here](#).

Boston plans to begin testing for antibodies to the coronavirus among asymptomatic residents in select neighborhoods in the city to get a better understanding of the prevalence of the virus. Full details [here](#).

### **New Bedford Coronavirus Update**

Mayor Jon Mitchell's office reported 62 additional confirmed COVID-19 cases in New Bedford Monday, bringing the total positive cases in the city to 503, **up from 441 on Saturday**. New Bedford health officials do not report COVID-19 numbers on Sundays. No new COVID-19 related death were reported, keeping the total at 13.

The New Bedford Police Department welcomed home Sgt. Ortega who is recovering from COVID-19. Full details [here](#).

### **Fall River Coronavirus Update**

Fall River reported 14 more confirmed positive cases of COVID-19 on Sunday. According to Mayor Coogan's Office, Fall River has seen 377 total positive cases. As of Friday, 149 cases have cleared isolation. Full details [here](#).

Sarah Rebello, who co-hosts a conservative radio show in Fall River, organized a rally at Government Center to express what she feels is an unconstitutional lockdown.

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## **Governor Baker announces \$130 million for Massachusetts**

# nursing facilities

The Baker-Polito Administration today announced a second round of funding up to \$130 million for nursing facilities to support COVID-19 response efforts over the next two months, as well as increased funding of \$44 million for residential congregate care service providers. This funding will support staffing costs, infection control and personal protective equipment (PPE). In addition to increased financial support, the administration has implemented required testing for staff and residents of nursing facilities.

**Additional Support Services:** The Commonwealth will offer support for temporary staffing assistance for all nursing homes in need. This includes clinical response teams of 120 nurses and CNAs deployed in teams of 10 during emergency situations, crisis management support and deployment of the Massachusetts National Guard. These efforts will be supported by a centralized infection control performance improvement center established by the Massachusetts Senior Care Association.

**Increased Financial Support for Nursing Facilities:** The administration is releasing a second round of funding for two months for nursing homes that meet specific requirements and accountability measures. The funding is dependent on required COVID-19 testing of all staff and residents, regular infection control audits, appropriate allocation of funding and the public release of facility performance and funding use.

Further details about this second round of funding available for nursing facilities include:

**Required Testing:** Facilities must test all staff and residents, and report results to the state. Facilities are also encouraged to identify and pursue testing avenues with area hospitals, EMS or other providers. The state's mobile

testing program is available for those facilities unable to set up testing.

**In-person Clinical Audits:** All nursing facilities will be regularly audited in-person for infection control and accountability, and each will receive a baseline audit during the first two weeks of May. These clinical audits will be conducted using a 28-point Infection Control Checklist, based on DPH, CDC and industry guidance. This checklist includes infection control, PPE supply and usage, staffing, clinical care, and communication requirements.

**Facilities will be scored into three ratings:** in adherence (green), in adherence but warrants inspection (yellow) and not in adherence (red).

**Funding Accountability:** Funding release is dependent on accountability measures, including audit ratings and appropriate funding allocation. Facilities must use this funding for staffing, infection control, PPE and other supports that directly benefit staff, including hotels for staff retention and infection control.

**Staffing Supports:** The Commonwealth will provide temporary staffing assistance to all nursing homes during the COVID-19 public health crisis, including clinical rapid response teams to provide urgent, short-term staffing for facilities in need, crisis management experts, and the deployment of the Massachusetts National Guard to aid with logistical, environmental and other supports. The state will also contract with staffing agencies to support facilities that are otherwise unable to access staffing agencies.

**Infection Control Performance Improvement Center:** The Massachusetts Senior Care Association and Hebrew Senior Life, in coordination with other industry providers, will lead an infection control performance improvement center to ensure accountability and provide assistance to facilities that are

struggling with infection control capability. The performance improvement center will provide infection control protocols and trainings and PPE supply chain and management support, as well as identify, triage and provide infection control specialist support and intervention.

**Public Reporting:** All performance measures and funding use will be publicly reported using a mandatory reporting template, and the Commonwealth will provide consolidated information in the testing completion status by facility, COVID-19 case counts and mortality of staff and residents, and audit results. These reports will be due shortly after June 30, and the Commonwealth will then compile and deliver a public report.

**Increased Support for Residential Congregate Care Service Providers:** The administration is providing a second phase of increased funding – \$44 million – across purchase of service residential congregate care service providers during the COVID-19 outbreak. This funding builds on the \$95 million in increased funding announced on March 30, bringing the total funding for these providers to \$139 million, and will support increased staffing costs, infection control and PPE.

To mitigate many residential congregate care service providers' expenses related to the COVID-19 surge, Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) agencies will increase the monthly reimbursement for May and June services for an additional 15%, in addition to the previously announced 10% increase. Further support to address provider needs during the surge include mobile COVID-19 testing expansion and coordination with MEMA to provide PPE to providers.

EOHHS agencies work with 238 residential service providers throughout the Commonwealth to ensure the health and well-being of over 20,500 individuals reflecting diverse populations, including children, youth and families, and individuals with physical, cognitive, emotional, behavioral

health, intellectual and developmental disabilities and survivors of domestic and sexual violence.