

Governor Baker extends non-essential business closures in Massachusetts to May 4

Today, the Baker-Polito Administration announced several updates related to the COVID-19 outbreak including extending the non-essential business emergency order and guidance for Executive Branch employees until May 4. The Department of Public Health's Stay-At-Home Advisory remains in effect. The Administration also updated the "COVID-19 Essential Services" categories for businesses and other organizations that provide essential services and workforces related to COVID-19 that are permitted to operate brick and mortar facilities during the emergency.

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 4. 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 prohibits gatherings of more than 10 people until May 4th.

The Administration updated the "COVID-19 Essential Services" list today, which is based on federal guidance that was updated earlier this week. The new list will go into effect tomorrow, April 1, at noon. While these businesses are designated as essential, they are urged to follow social distancing protocols for workers in accordance with guidance from the Department of Public Health (DPH).

Some of the updates to the essential services list include:

- Clarity around the supply chain that supports other essential services
- Adding health care providers like chiropractors and optometrists
- Expanding the types of workers providing disinfectant and sanitation services

Hotel/Motel Guidance: As part of the updated essential business list, DPH issued new guidance today around hotels, motels, inns, beds and breakfasts and other short-term residential rentals. Based on this new guidance, hotels, motels, and short-term rentals may only be used for efforts related to fighting COVID-19, like front line health workers or individuals, or for Massachusetts residents who have been otherwise displaced from their residences.

Stay at Home Advisory: Last week, Governor Charlie Baker directed DPH to issue a stay-at-home advisory, and the Governor announced today that the advisory will remain in effect. Residents are advised 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 4. Full guidance will be sent to Executive Branch employees later today.

Some Executive Branch services and walk-in offices remain open, but residents are encouraged to use online services when

available. For the status of in-person Executive Branch office locations, please click **here**.

Field Medical Station Announcement: The Commonwealth, through MEMA, has requested and received approval for a Field Medical Station that will provide additional medical care capacity as the state plans for a surge in cases. The federal Strategic National Stockpile has approved a 250-bed field medical station that will be deployed to the DCU Center in the City of Worcester this week. This temporary facility will be managed by UMass Memorial and staffed by a partnership including the City of Worcester and others. The temporary field medical center will be used to treat lower acuity patients who still need monitoring.

Nursing/Rest Home Program: The Commonwealth is implementing a pilot project that allows for safe, on-site testing of symptomatic residents of nursing and rest homes with a quick turnaround. The pilot will operate under the auspices of the Massachusetts National Guard in partnership with the Department of Public Health and Broad Institute of Cambridge, and samples will be collected by trained personnel from the Massachusetts National Guard. Prior to this launch, the only way for nursing home residents to be tested would be to be transported to a hospital or physician's office.

Members of the public should continue checking www.mass.gov/covid19 for the latest information on impacts from the COVID-19 outbreak.