

# Governor Baker visits Lawrence to tour New Balance's PPE production line

Today, Governor Charlie Baker and Lt. Governor Karyn Polito joined New Balance chairman Jim Davis for a tour of New Balance's Lawrence factory, a facility that has helped the company produce more than 1 million masks in response to the COVID-19 public health emergency. The tour highlighted the company's face mask models, including a new version being rolled out to consumers in the coming weeks, and a new surgical mask model for frontline health care workers.

Nearly 100 New Balance employees are manufacturing products at the factory and a nearby distribution center in Lawrence, an effort which began in late March with the production of general-use face masks. The company has been supported by the Massachusetts Manufacturing Emergency Team (M-ERT), which provided support around regulations and labeling for medical equipment, as well as feedback on the demand for personal protective equipment (PPE), which has risen greatly since the M-ERT's establishment in early March. The M-ERT is a coordinated effort comprised of members from academia, industry and government to address the urgent need for PPE to support health care workers on the front lines of Massachusetts' COVID-19 response.

"As the Commonwealth continues its fight against coronavirus, face coverings will remain critical to supporting public health," said Governor Baker. "Our Administration remains committed to partnering with local companies such as New Balance to ensure there is a reliable supply of PPE to protect frontline workers and the general public."

"With millions of pieces of PPE already produced by

participating companies, M-ERT has played a key role in the gradual reopening of Massachusetts,” said Lt. Governor Polito. “We are thankful to New Balance and the other M-ERT companies that have leveraged this program to shift to the production of life-saving gear and supplies.”

New Balance was directly assisted by experts from the M-ERT team, including Ben Linville-Engler from MIT’s System Design & Management Group and Haden Quinlan from MIT’s Department of Mechanical Engineering (MechE), who hosted bi-weekly meetings with the company to confer over the regulatory environment for medical products, connect the company to testing resources, and deliver information regarding the demand and need for certain types of PPE. Another M-ERT expert, Dr. Michael Rein, the Senior Product Engineer at Advanced Functional Fabrics of America, provided critical guidance around product testing.

Starting today, New Balance will make available a new general-use face mask for the public, called the ‘NB Face Mask V3,’ a three-layer, lightweight and breathable, non-sterile physical barrier face mask with a moldable nose piece. In addition to the masks produced directly by New Balance, the company has also repaired straps on 50,000 N95 respirator masks for Brigham & Women’s Hospital, enabling them to be used by their medical staff.

Today’s tour featured several prototypes the company is looking to produce, including a disposable, 3D-printed stethoscope. In addition to founder Jim Davis, the Governor and Lt. Governor were joined by several New Balance leaders who highlighted the production teams making the masks, including: Joe Preston, President & CEO of New Balance; Dave Wheeler, Chief Operating Officer; and Kevin McCoy, Vice President of Made Product Development & Manufacturing.

“The incredible passion, industrial R&D ability and innovative thinking of our associates combined with our New England manufacturing resources enabled us to pivot quickly to produce

PPE for frontline workers and health care facilities facing the COVID-19 health crisis,” said Joe Preston, President & CEO of New Balance. “We applaud the Baker-Polito Administration for establishing a strong and highly-engaged Manufacturing Emergency Response Team that has provided us with meaningful and expert guidance throughout our journey.”

“We are incredibly proud and humbled to do our part to help so many in our health care community by producing more than one million masks in the past two months,” said Dave Wheeler, Chief Operating Officer of New Balance. “We are thankful that the innovative thinking of our associates, our long history of domestic manufacturing and the work of our highly skilled teams in our factories have allowed us to quickly adapt to help meet the immense mask needs of the health care community, and now the general public.”

New Balance is one of the Massachusetts manufacturers featured on a new website launched by the MassTech Collaborative that profiles nearly 20 Massachusetts manufacturers that have shifted operations to produce critical PPE and other materials. The M-ERT effort is being managed by MassTech, the quasi-public economic development agency that oversees advanced manufacturing programs for the Commonwealth, and was devised as an emergency response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Nearly 750 companies from around the world have submitted their interest to the M-ERT, including nearly 450 from Massachusetts. Of those, 27 companies have made it through the program, producing 4 million pieces of PPE and other critical materials to date.