

Massachusetts health officials report 1,017 new COVID-19 cases, nine more deaths

Colin A. Young
State House News Service

State public health officials reported nine additional deaths and more than 1,000 new cases of COVID-19 on Saturday, the greatest single-day increase in the number of cases yet seen in the Bay State.

There are now 4,257 confirmed cases of the coronavirus-caused illness in Massachusetts, an increase of 1,017 or about 31 percent from Friday, the Department of Public Health announced. The state also announced nine new COVID-19 deaths, bringing the fatality count to a total of 44.

It has been 56 days since Massachusetts announced the first positive case of COVID-19 in the state on Feb. 1.



The nine Massachusetts residents who recently died of COVID-19 were: an Essex County woman in her 60s who had pre-existing conditions and was hospitalized; a Suffolk County woman in her 80s who had pre-existing conditions and was hospitalized; a Worcester County man in his 80s who had pre-existing conditions and was hospitalized; a Norfolk County woman in her 80s; a Hampden County man in his 70s who had pre-existing conditions and was hospitalized; a Hampden County man in his 80s who had pre-existing conditions; a Norfolk County man in his 80s; a Worcester County woman in her 50s who was hospitalized; and a Hampden County woman in her 90s, according

to DPH.

As of midday Saturday, 35,049 Massachusetts residents had been tested for COVID-19, an increase of 5,678 over Friday. As of Saturday, a little more than 12 percent of tests conducted resulted in confirmation of a case of COVID-19.

On Saturday morning, the governor and First Lady Lauren Baker made a visit to the Red Cross donation center in Dedham to urge Massachusetts residents to donate blood, calling it a way to save lives as the state strives to prevent its health care system from becoming overwhelmed by the pressures of the coronavirus pandemic.

Baker addressed the news that broke late Friday of Public Health Commissioner Monica Bharel having tested positive for COVID-19, saying that she is a “rabid distancer” who stayed apart from others. He said he was not among Bharel’s close contacts traced by public health officials and that he has not been in the same building as Bharel in about a week.

The governor said Saturday that he has not been tested himself, has not developed any symptoms and that his temperature was 97.7 degrees when the Red Cross checked it before allowing him to donate blood Saturday.

Also Saturday morning, the White House announced that President Donald Trump had approved the disaster declaration requested Thursday by Baker, opening a spigot for more federal funding to supplement local COVID-19 efforts in the Bay State.

The Baker administration said that the disaster declaration means that “affected local governments, state agencies and certain private non-profit organizations statewide will be reimbursed for 75% of their costs associated with response and emergency protective measures.” It also means that the Mass. Department of Mental Health will receive federal aid to “assist individuals and families in recovering from the psychological effects of the COVID-19 outbreak through

electronic phone and chat technology."