

Mayor Mitchell announces reopening of regional surge care center in New Bedford for COVID-19

Mayor Jon Mitchell today announced the reopening of a Southeastern Massachusetts Regional Care Center in New Bedford for those recovering from COVID-19.

The former nursing home facility, located at 4586 Acushnet Avenue, is slated to open January 18, 2021 as a COVID-19 recovery and care center. The facility will be operated by Essex Group's nonprofit Buttonwood Healthcare division, a partnership that began in April with the announcement of the establishment of two regional care centers in New Bedford.

It is one of two such facilities leased by the City. Earlier this year, the City opened the other of the two facilities, located at 1123 Rockdale Avenue; that care center will remain closed at this time. The Acushnet Avenue site has 123 beds, while the Rockdale Avenue site has 107 beds. The care center will be staffed by physicians and advanced practice nurses who are committed to seeing that patients are cared for and treated.

The City has decided to reopen the facility to assist the region's healthcare system with the recent surge of COVID-19 patients. The facility will house patients who still require medical care, but do not require hospitalization, to ease the burden on local hospitals.

The centers are designed to serve as post-hospital recovery centers for patients recovering from COVID-19. Patients admitted to the hospital with COVID-19 may need extended recovery time from the illness and/or may need additional time

to be released from quarantine, utilizing one of these care centers.

“Our most important objective right now is to protect the vulnerable so that they can have the opportunity to be vaccinated. Central to this effort is ensuring that the health care system can attend to all patients who come through its doors,” said Mayor Mitchell. “We retained control of the surge facilities we established last Spring in case there was another resurgence of the virus, and now we need the same relief again. With new cases higher than ever and a regional health system stretched nearly to full capacity, we are reopening the larger of the two facilities so that our hospitals can continue to provide necessary care to COVID and non-COVID patients alike. I wish to thank Frank Romano of Essex Group for his steadfast commitment to operate the facility, Keith Hovan at Southcoast Health for his reliable partnership, and the Baker-Polito Administration for its willingness to cover the patients admitted to the surge facility with public health insurance.”

“Essex Group is pleased to continue to serve as the operator of New Bedford’s innovative regional care centers, which provide necessary additional capacity for patients recovering from COVID-19,” said Frank Romano, CEO of Essex Group Management Corporation. “We are pleased to be part of the team collaborating to stand up these facilities, thanks to the leadership of Mayor Jon Mitchell, who recognized the need to add COVID-19 capacity in southeastern Massachusetts early on in this crisis. We are also thankful to Secretary Marylou Sudders for her support and for helping to make the process a smooth and cohesive one, including through MassHealth coverage.”