

Thursday, March 11, 2021

COVID-19 Command Center

Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency

Situation Update

The Command Center Situation Report is published weekly. The next report will be published on Thursday, 3/18/21.



On Wednesday, Governor Baker, Lt. Governor Polito, and HHS Secretary Marylou Sudders visited a local N-95 mask manufacturing facility in West Bridgewater operated by the Shawmut Corporation and Fallon Company and announced the upcoming launch of a new vaccine preregistration system on Friday.

In This Week's Report:

- Latest Data: Public Health & Vaccine Data Update
- Week in Review: Key State Actions
 - Preregistration System for Mass Vaccination Locations to Launch Friday
 - Dedicated Educator Vaccination Days at Mass Vaccination Sites
 - Administration Announces Extension of Targeted Free COVID-19 Testing Sites through June
 - DPH, Emergency Management, and Disaster Recovery Updates
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Helpful Links:

- [COVID-19 Vaccination Locations](#)
- [When can I get the COVID-19 vaccine?](#)
- [COVID-19 Vaccine in Massachusetts](#)
- [Public Messaging Resources for Municipalities & Businesses](#)
- [Mass.gov/findfoodhelp](#)
- [HandHoldMA.org](#)
- [Reopening Massachusetts](#)
- [Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency](#)
- [Unemployment & COVID-19](#)
- [Dept. Of Transitional Assistance Online Portal](#)
- [COVID-19 Cost Eligibility and Tracking Guidance](#)



Situation in Numbers

Massachusetts **current as of 3/11**

563,983 Total Confirmed Cases ([click here for more information](#))

16,218 Deaths among confirmed cases

17,129,876 tests for the virus conducted to date by MA State Public Health Laboratory, hospitals, and commercial laboratories.

United States **Last Updated 3/11**

Case numbers are updated regularly at noon. Saturday/Sunday reports are preliminary and have not been confirmed with state/territorial health departments.

Total Cases Reported to CDC:

29,052,862 Total Cases

527,726 Deaths

57 Jurisdictions Reporting Cases (50 states, D.C., Puerto Rico, Guam, Northern Marianas, Marshall Islands, American Samoa, and US V.I.)

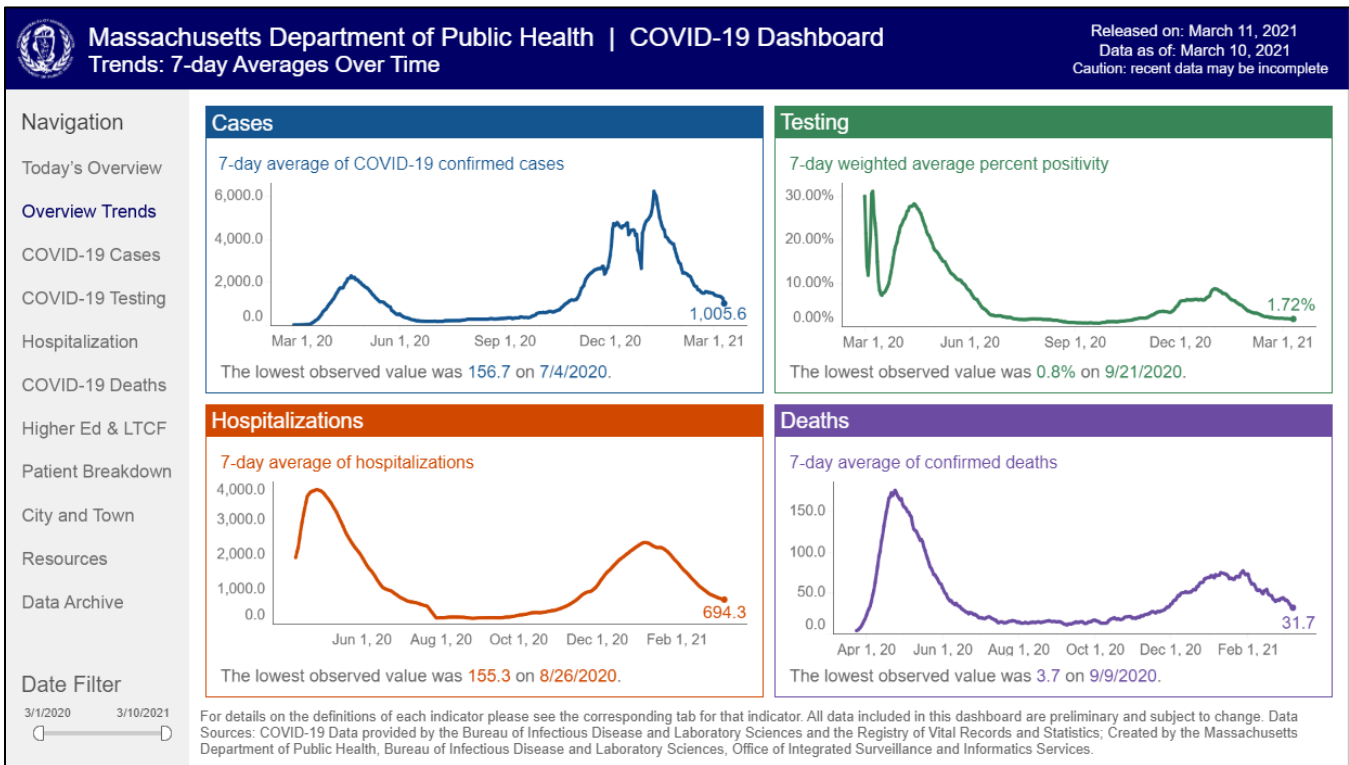
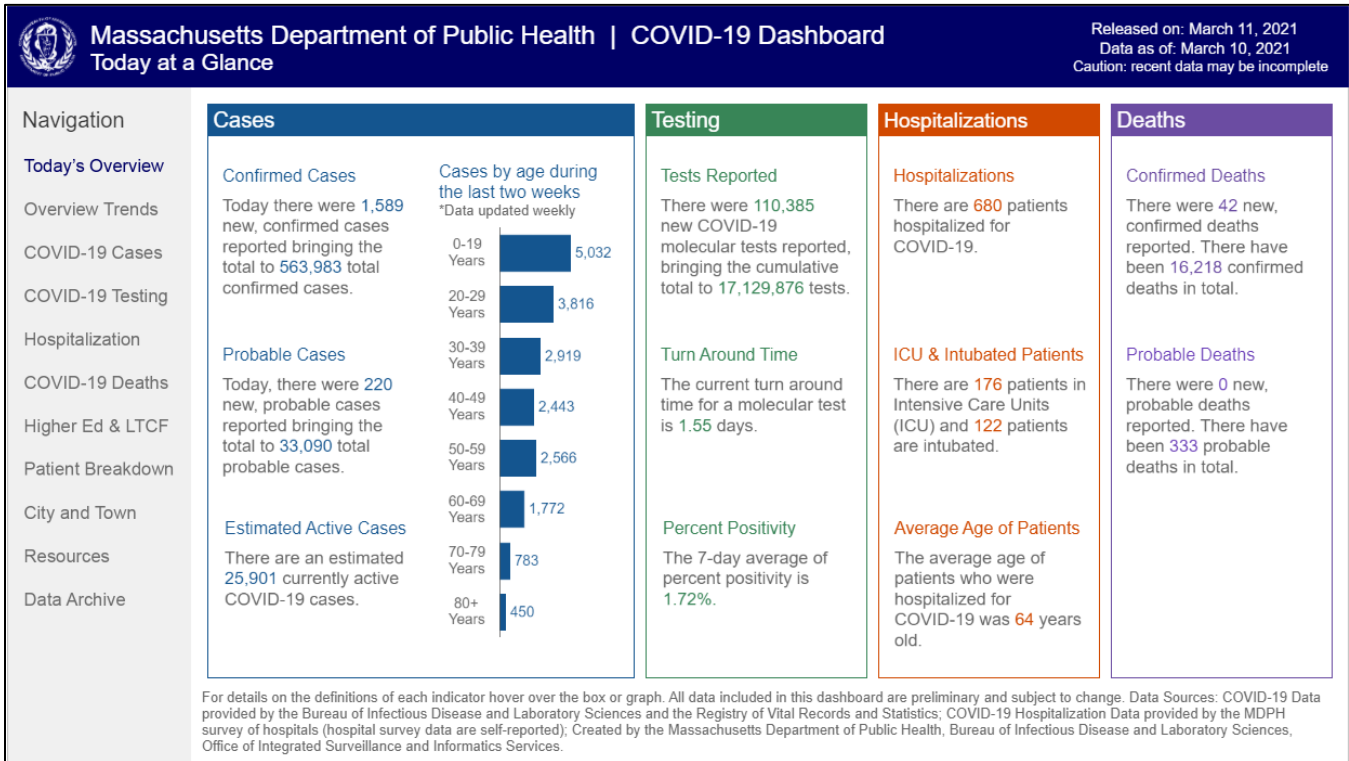
Social Distancing Basics:

- ✓ Stay Home
- ✓ Call/Facetime/online chat with friends and loved ones.

If you go out for essential needs:

- ✓ Avoid crowds
- ✓ Stay 6 feet away from others
- ✓ Don't shake hands or hug
- ✓ Wear a face covering or mask.

Latest Data: COVID-19 Public Health Update



COVID-19 RESPONSE COMMAND CENTER WEEKLY SITUATION REPORT

Weekly Public Health Report:

The Command Center released the [Weekly Public Health Report, with town by town information, including the weekly listing of city and town risk levels](#) on Thursday, 3/11. The report also includes granular information on cases by county, biweekly testing rates, contact tracing information (including active COVID cluster information by Exposure Setting Type), hospitalization data, race and ethnicity data, information about cases in long term care facilities, and PPE distribution data.

Vaccine Update: For a more detailed weekly breakdown, [visit the MA COVID-19 Vaccination Data webpage](#).

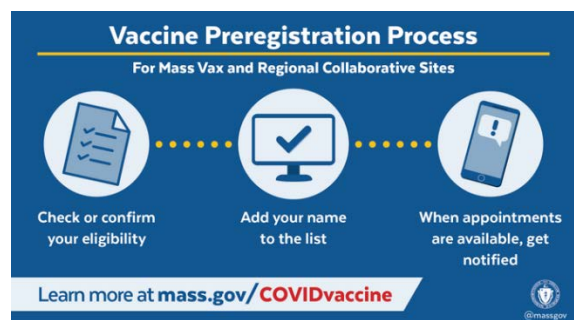
	3/5	3/6	3/7	3/8	3/9	3/10	3/11
DOSES SHIPPED							
Doses Shipped to MA Providers (MIIS)*	1,805,825	1,805,825	1,805,825	1,805,825	1,951,665	1,998,805	2,091,835
Doses Shipped to Pharmacies and Directly by the Federal Government - Including FPPP Providers (Tiberius)	614,535	622,725	623,895	627,935	641,835	682,135	689,655
Grand Total Shipped to MA	2,420,360	2,428,550	2,429,720	2,433,760	2,593,500	2,680,940	2,781,490
DOSES ADMINISTERED (MIIS)*							
1st Moderna or Pfizer Doses Administered # of people with at least one dose	1,355,389	1,390,259	1,414,186	1,428,657	1,471,233	1,504,144	1,533,849
2nd Moderna or Pfizer Doses Administered # of people fully vaccinated	646,005	672,014	691,535	700,741	731,697	752,083	776,524
Janssen (J&J) Doses Administered (MIIS) # of people fully vaccinated	4,406	7,355	12,141	14,395	26,553	32,706	43,035
Grand Total Doses Administered (MIIS)	2,005,800	2,069,628	2,117,862	2,143,793	2,229,483	2,288,933	2,353,408
Grand Total Fully Vaccinated People with Existing COVID-19 Vaccines**	650,411	679,369	703,676	715,136	758,250	784,789	819,559
% of Total Doses Shipped That Have Been Reported as Administered	82.9%	85.2%	87.2%	88.1%	86.0%	85.4%	84.6%
*Data from the Massachusetts Immunization Information System (MIIS) are as of midnight the night before.							
**Fully vaccinated people have 2 doses of Moderna or Pfizer vaccine or 1 dose of Janssen (J&J) vaccine							

NEW: The Command Center released new municipal vaccination data today. The weekly data sets include information on individuals vaccinated for COVID-19 by their zip code and city or town of residence. The data includes age, sex, and race/ethnicity characteristics of vaccinated individuals. [The data can be found here.](#)

Week in Review: State Actions

Preregistration for Mass Vaccination Sites Launches Friday

The Baker-Polito Administration has announced that a new preregistration signup tool will be available for the state's 7 mass vaccination sites starting Friday, March 12. The new system will make it easier to request and book an appointment at a mass vaccination site at a nearby location when they are available. More sites will be added to the preregistration system in the coming weeks. When preregistration launches on Friday, it will replace the current booking platforms for mass vaccination sites for online booking. The COVID-19 Vaccine Scheduling Resource



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Line is available by calling 2-1-1 to help residents without internet access, or who have difficulty using the internet to preregister.

The Administration also announced the weekly distribution of vaccine doses statewide for different providers, reminding residents that there are 170 public vaccination sites statewide in addition to health systems that are offering appointments to their patients.

More information on vaccine sites can be found at: vaxfinder.mass.gov

Preregistration System:

Partnering with the Google Cloud Team, the Administration will launch a preregistration system for mass vaccination sites only starting Friday, March 12. This tool will be available at mass.gov/COVIDvaccine. Preregistration will allow eligible residents to book an appointment at one of the state's 7 mass vaccination sites.

Details on the Preregistration Process:

- Eligible residents will complete the online form at mass.gov/COVIDVaccine to request to book an appointment at a mass vaccination site nearby.
- After completing the form, residents will get a confirmation via their preferred method of contact (text, e-mail, phone) and receive a weekly update about their status. Residents may opt out of their preregistration at any time if they secure an appointment elsewhere.
- When an appointment becomes available at a mass vaccination site, the resident will be notified and will have 24 hours to accept the appointment once it is offered to them. If an appointment is not accepted after 24 hours, the resident will go back into the queue to wait for another appointment.
- To accommodate older residents and others who are unable to use the form, the preregistration form allows family members, caregivers, or other companions to fill out the form on behalf of someone else. Residents who do not have internet access or someone to fill the form out for them can call 2-1-1 to preregister.

Available appointments will be offered to residents based on their vaccine eligibility and the availability of appointments at mass vaccination sites nearby. Initially, this program is only for the state's 7 mass vaccination sites. More sites will be added to the pre-registration system in April.

Massachusetts receives a very limited supply of vaccine from the federal government each week. Due to high demand and limited supply, there are only a small number of appointments for eligible residents. Given the limited number of available appointments due to constraints on vaccine supply, it could take several weeks for eligible, preregistered residents to receive a notification about an available appointment.

In addition to preregistering for a mass vaccination appointment, eligible residents are encouraged to book vaccine appointments at any of the 170 public vaccine sites across the Commonwealth. The state has also allocated a supply of doses to certain health care providers, hospitals and community health centers that will provide instructions to their patients on their vaccine process.

Once the preregistration system is launched on Friday, March 12, it will replace the weekly appointment release on Thursdays for mass vaccination sites only. Eligible residents will need to preregister online or contact the call center to request an appointment for a mass vaccination site.

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The preregistration system will not impact this week's appointment release on Thursday, March 11 for mass vaccination sites. Residents should follow the usual process on March 11 to secure an appointment as a mass vaccination site.

Other Ways to Access a Vaccine Appointment:

Eligible residents are encouraged to look for appointments at any of the state's 170 public vaccine sites by searching vaxfinder.mass.gov.

This webpage contains information on locations, hours, and instructions to schedule appointments. New appointments are added frequently for many sites.

Vaccine doses are also provided to certain health care providers, hospitals, and community health centers. If you are an eligible patient, please follow instructions from your health care provider on how to access a vaccine.

State Distribution:

This week, the state will receive a constrained supply of about 155,000 first doses. First doses and second dose allocations (total doses) this week were divided among providers as follows:

- Mass vaccination sites: 83,000
- Hospital Providers (both private and public): 79,000
- Regional Collaboratives (12 total): 38,000
- Community Health Centers: 25,000
- Local Boards of Health (to complete 2nd dose appointments and support 20 disproportionately impacted communities): 25,000

Weekly allocations are subject to change based on federal availability, demand from providers, and obligations to meet second doses. Providers have 10 days to use their doses.

Federal Doses:

In addition to the state allocation, the federal government distributes vaccines to CVS Health sites as part of the Federal Retail Pharmacy Partnership as well as to certain Massachusetts federally qualified community health centers. These quantities fluctuate on a weekly basis and are not counted as part of the state's weekly allocation.

This week, 95,000 first and second doses have been allocated to the retail pharmacy program and 19,000 Johnson & Johnson doses have been allocated to the federally qualified health centers. Individuals looking to book appointments across any of these providers should visit mass.gov/COVIDvaccine to learn more.

Mass Vaccination Appointments:

On Thursday, March 11, over 40,000 new first dose appointments for mass vaccination sites will be made available to eligible groups through the state's website and the COVID-19 Vaccine Scheduling Resource Line. Additionally, over 40,000 second dose appointments have also been scheduled at mass vaccination sites.

This is the last week that mass vaccination sites will be posted online on Thursday morning. Starting March 12, all mass vaccination appointments will be booked through the pre-registration system.

Mass Vaccination Appointment Update:

Thursday, March 11th is the last time that appointments at mass vaccination locations will be available to book directly online through providers' scheduling websites.

Please note: Fenway Park, Gillette Stadium and Reggie Lewis Center appointments should be booked through vaxfinder.mass.gov (These locations are no longer listed at MAimmunizations.org)

Starting Friday, March 12th: All appointments at mass vaccination locations will be booked through the Google Cloud [preregistration system](#).

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As more individuals have received a first vaccine dose across the Commonwealth, there is a greater need to book second appointments, so the mass vaccination sites have fewer first dose appointments available on a weekly basis.

Dedicated Educator Vaccination Days at Mass Vaccination Sites

On March 11, pursuant to a federal directive, approximately 400,000 K-12 educators, childcare workers and K-12 school staff are eligible to receive COVID-19 vaccine in Massachusetts.

K-12 educators, childcare workers and K-12 school staff may receive vaccine from any of the 170 public vaccine sites available on mass.gov/COVIDvaccine.

In an effort to support the Biden-Harris Administration's directive for states to prioritize teacher vaccinations, the Administration will designate 4 days where the state's 7 mass vaccination sites will only offer 1st dose appointments for K-12 educators, child care workers and K-12 school staff.

These dates are: **Saturday, March 27, Saturday, April 3, Saturday, April 10, and Sunday, April 11.**

Workers in this group must use the pre-registration system to request an appointment at one of the seven mass vaccination sites and attest they are a K-12 educator, childcare worker, or K-12 school staff.

All other vaccine providers (including Regional Collaboratives) are encouraged, but not required, to restrict their appointments to K-12 educators, child care workers and K-12 school staff on Saturday, March 27, Saturday, April 3, Saturday, April 10 and Sunday, April 11, for consistency. Providers may designate alternative dates, in lieu of the 4 dates designated by the State, if necessary.

Clinics may not restrict access to individuals who live or work in a particular area.

All vaccine providers (including regional collaboratives) must submit their dates for educator clinics by Tuesday, March 16. The Command Center will post the schedule for all clinics next week.

K-12 educators, childcare workers and K-12 school staff are urged to book appointments through mass.gov/COVIDvaccine beginning on March 11 as well as to book through the federal retail pharmacy program's CVS website. Given the limited supply of vaccine, K-12 educators, childcare workers, and K-12 school staff may not receive vaccine until mid-April or later.

Mass Vaccination Locations:

- Springfield, Eastfield Mall
- Natick, Natick Mall
- Foxboro, Gillette Stadium
- Danvers, Doubletree Hotel
- Boston, Fenway Park (through 3/27) and Hynes Convention Center (starting 3/18)
- Roxbury, Reggie Lewis Center
- Dartmouth, Former Circuit City

Regional Collaboratives:

- Barnstable County
- Berkshire County Boards of Health Association
- Franklin County Regional Collaborative

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- Harrington Hospital, in Collaboration with LBOH
- Heywood Hospital, in Collaboration with LBOH
- Lawrence General Hospital, in Collaboration with LBOH
- Marshfield-Plymouth
- Northampton & Amherst
- Randolph – Collaboration between Avon, Holbrook, and Randolph
- Rutland
- Worcester, Worcester State University, Commonwealth Medicine and St. Vincent Hospital
- Lower Merrimack Valley- Collaboration between Amesbury, Georgetown, Groveland, Merrimack, Newbury, Newburyport, Rowley, Salisbury, and West Newbury
- Southern Worcester County Regional COVID-19 Vaccination Coalition- Collaboration between Uxbridge, Northbridge, Mendon, Douglas, Bellingham, Blackstone, Hopedale, Millville, Milford, Oxford, Upton, Sutton

Administration Announces Extension of Targeted Free COVID-19 Testing Sites through June

On Wednesday, the Administration announced an extension of the “Stop the Spread” COVID-19 initiative, which provides free COVID-19 testing in communities across the Commonwealth. The program, which was set to close on March 31, has been extended through June 30, 2021.

Building on Massachusetts’ nation-leading COVID-19 testing program, state-sponsored testing will continue to be available to all Massachusetts residents at no cost to them through June 30, 2021 at more than 35 locations. Testing is one of the important public health tools, in addition to contact tracing, complying with public health mitigation measures such as face coverings, physical distancing, staying home when sick, and good hygiene, to mitigate the spread of COVID-19.

Since the state began this free virus testing in July 2020, more than 1.8 million tests have been conducted at “Stop the Spread” locations as of March 3, 2021. Meanwhile, the total number of COVID-19 virus tests conducted state-wide at all testing providers since the pandemic began is more than 16.8 million.

The Stop the Spread initiative is a data-driven effort to reduce the prevalence of COVID-19 in communities across the Commonwealth. All state residents may visit the locations even if they do not reside in the town or city where the testing is being conducted.

Residents of the state may visit the following website to find testing locations: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/find-a-covid-19-test>. Additional information about COVID-19 testing, including why testing is important and what you should do if your test is positive, can be found at www.mass.gov/GetTested.

Important Updates

Department of Public Health Updates:

- What does it mean to be an equity city? Commissioner Bharel explains the DPH program targeting 20 cities and towns that have been hardest hit by COVID-19 in the Lawrence Eagle Tribune. Read the story [here](#).
- DPH is working with community leaders to promote vaccination. Here is the latest video from Suffolk County DA Rachel Rollins: <https://twitter.com/MassDPH/status/1369403525667651591>. The videos are helping to amplify the “Trust the Facts, Get the Vax” public campaign. Information and resources can be found [here](#).

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- DPH communicated an update to providers with key messages about the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, a new website for the [COVID-19 Vaccine Equity Initiative](#), and [Multilingual COVID-19 Materials](#).
- DPH issued the [Weekly COVID-19 Vaccine Provider Bulletin](#), for the week of 3/7.
- The DPH Epidemiology Line handled 373 COVID-19 calls and 61 non-COVID-19 calls for a total of 434 calls from 3/1 through 3/7.
- COVID-19 Vaccinations for K-12 and Childcare Workers [Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- MA COVID-19 Command Center [Exposure & Return to Work Guidance](#) - Revised 3/8/21
- As of 3/9, the [Academic Public Health Volunteer Corps](#) has 303 volunteers supporting 43 local boards of health.
- MA211 received 7,113 calls from Monday 3/1 through Sunday 3/7 for a new total of 255,317. These numbers do not reflect calls to the new appointment assistance call centers.
- DPH issued Update to Guidance [Regarding Seasonal Influenza Vaccination of Healthcare Personnel at Massachusetts Nursing Homes and Rest Homes for the 2020-2021 Influenza Season](#).
- Due to decreasing COVID -19 cases and hospitalizations, improving hospital capacity, and a diminishing need for daily load balancing, HMCC Regions 1, 2, and 4 moved to Tier 2, effective 3/8. Other HMCC Regions remain in Tier 3. This modification was made in accordance with the [DPH COVID-19 Resurgence Planning and Response Guidance for Acute Care Hospitals](#). DPH and the COVID-19 Command Center will continue to work closely with all regions to monitor hospital capacity statewide.
- For the date range of 2/26 – 3/4, all 96 Massachusetts hospitals were 100% compliant in their COVID-19 data submissions to the DPH WebEOC portal which is submitted to the federal HHS Protect portal daily.
- There are currently 11 Rapid Response Teams, comprised of nursing staff, deployed to nursing homes across the Commonwealth. Teams are also helping nursing homes on the day of their Vaccine Clinics to ensure staff and residents are monitored after vaccination.
- There are also 2 National Guard Teams deployed and supporting nursing and rest homes.

Emergency Management and Disaster Recovery Updates:

Mass Care

- 3 state contracted isolation/recovery hotels in the communities of Everett, Pittsfield, and Taunton continue to receive client placements: 55 individuals are currently housed in the program.
 - Top 5 referring cities:
 - Boston (372)
 - Worcester (188)
 - Springfield (170)
 - Cambridge (117)
 - Brockton (114)
 - To date, a total of 2,141 residents have been placed in these hotels for safe isolation and recovery, an increase of 46 since last week

Community Food Box Program Update 3/5-3/11:

MEMA is partnering with the Salvation Army, and a vendor, to bring in shelf-stable food boxes each week to support communities in their effort to deliver food to individuals and families in quarantine and isolation who require assistance accessing food. Each week MEMA's warehouse receives a delivery of shelf-stable food boxes. Distribution of food boxes is coordinated between MEMA and communities in need via a request through WebEOC. The table below reflects the current food box inventory, and number of food boxes distributed to communities during the weekly reporting period (data is updated every Friday).

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Total Number of Food Boxes in MEMA's Inventory	Total Number of Food Boxes Distributed to One or More Local Communities During the Reporting Period	Total Number of Communities that Received Food Boxes During the Reporting Period
1,444	873	7

Logistics (including Personal Protective Equipment and Supplies)

- 81 orders prepared for pickup or delivery from the MEMA State Logistics Warehouse from 3/5-3/10.
- MDPH coordinated 27 deliveries to health care entities on Tuesday (3/9) (1 testing supplies, 25 BinaxNOW kits and 1 vaccine supplies); 16 deliveries were made on Thursday (3/11) (1 PPE, 1 testing supplies, 12 BinaxNOW kits and 2 therapeutic) and 6 deliveries have been scheduled for Friday (3/12) (1 testing supplies and 5 BinaxNOW kits).

Disaster Recovery

On March 27, 2020, the President [declared](#) a Major Disaster Declaration for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts related to the COVID-19 pandemic response. Through this declaration, federal aid will be made available to cities and towns, state agencies, and certain non-profits in all Massachusetts counties to help pay for emergency protective measures (response costs) related to the COVID-19 pandemic. MEMA's Recovery Unit has developed a [webpage](#) with information and guidance on, but not limited to, disaster declaration, eligibility criteria, and the application process. Highlights from the Disaster Recovery process include the following:

MEMA COVID-19 EXECUTIVE DASHBOARD AGGREGATE PROGRAM VIEW			
Overall (Best Available Estimate)	Submitted (Eligibility & Cost Review)	Approved* (by FEMA)	Paid (by MEMA)
\$1.4B +\$3.90M	\$1.1B +\$1.90M	\$516.4M +\$602.13K	\$291.0M +\$60.72K
953 Projects +16	666 Projects +18	162 Projects +7	75 Projects +1
Approved Applicants: 653			

Data as of: 3/5/2021

Note: Financial data for pre-submission projects reflect 100% federal cost share while submitted projects continue to reflect 75% federal cost share. The remaining 25% federal cost share for submitted projects will be reported as FEMA adjusts cost share for these projects on a rolling basis. In addition, figures do not include MEMA management cost allowance.

- FEMA Requests for Public Assistance (RPA): 663 (+1)
- Technical Assistance Requests: 518 (+2)
- Technical Assistance Meetings Conducted with RDU Applicants (excludes exploratory calls): 610 (+23)
- New project obligations (9): \$683,786.80
- Redistributed [memorandum](#) from August 2020 outlining that FEMA has extended the completion deadline for COVID-19 emergency work until further notice and messaged that time extension requests are not necessary at this time.
- Continuing outreach through MEMA Regions to municipalities that have not yet submitted a DR-4496 Request for Public Assistance.
- Conducted FEMA Public Assistance guidance webinar today (3/11/21) for all entities participating in COVID-19 regional vaccination sites.

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- A new COVID-19 Public Assistance Frequently Asked Questions page is live on the MEMA website: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-public-assistance-frequently-asked-questions>.
- Conducting FEMA Public Assistance guidance calls with entities in the Commonwealth operating regional COVID-19 vaccination sites.

COVID-19 Cases in Long-Term Care (LTC) Facilities (as of 3/11)	
Residents/Healthcare Workers of LTC Facilities	34,768
LTC Facilities Reporting at Least One Case of COVID-19	424
Deaths Reported in LTC Facilities	8,723



Holyoke Soldiers’ Home Weekly Update (current as of 3/9/21)

- This week, the VA is conducting the annual health survey of the Soldiers’ Home in Holyoke. Due to COVID-19 protocols, the survey is being done virtually, including direct care observations, and examining the physical structure of the building virtually. The VA conducts surveys annually for state veterans’ homes.
- This week, the Soldiers’ Home is onboarding two licensed social workers, and one CNA as it continues to hire staff and management. Last week, the Home’s new Chief Financial Officer began. The Soldiers’ Home leadership is committed to ensuring the safety of the Veteran residents and restoring the Home to its rightful place that treats them with dignity, honor, and respect.
- The Soldiers’ Home in Holyoke has re-opened in-person visitation for veteran residents and their loved ones, starting February 10, 2021, and since then has hosted 316 visitors.
 - The Home is implementing updated guidance from DPH to ensure the safety and wellbeing of residents, staff, and those visiting. All visitors are screened and required to wear PPE and social distance, and negative test results are strongly encouraged before visiting. There is designated visitation space at each Home, and high touch surfaces are sanitized after each visit.
 - Visitation is taking place Tuesday through Saturday, from 9:00am to 4:00pm, and 24 slots will be offered each day. Visits are scheduled for at least 45 minutes.
 - Visits can be scheduled by calling the Family Line at 413-552-4764. 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
 - The Soldiers’ Home in Holyoke will also continue to offer and support virtual visitation. The Family Line is available for ad hoc updates with support from social work and clinical staff. Families can also request updates via email at CommunicationsMailbox-HLY@Mass.gov.
 - Note: The Soldiers’ Home can only share medical information about a resident with the authorized health care proxy on file.
- The Soldiers’ Home in Holyoke hosted 3 onsite vaccination clinics, the last on February 9. The first and second vaccination clinics were held on December 29 and January 19. Following the completion of the vaccination clinics. At the Soldiers’ Home in Holyoke:
 - 117 veteran residents and 220 staff have received both doses.
 - 1 veteran resident and 10 staff have received their first dose.
 - The Home is strongly encouraging all staff to receive the vaccine. On top of the efforts to provide educational information about the COVID-19 vaccine, including COVID-19 vaccine FAQ

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sheets, and vaccine informational forums with clinical staff, individuals who had not been vaccinated received individual outreach to provide education and encourage vaccination. All educational materials are available in both English and Spanish.

- Phase III of the Refresh Project continues on the 4th Floor. The Refresh Project is an important infection control initiative to improve the home in the immediate term for residents and staff.
- On February 11, the Baker-Polito Administration [filed a \\$400 million bond bill](#) which would provide capital authorization for the major project to reconstruct the long-term care facility at the Holyoke Soldiers' Home. The Commonwealth has been making capital investments to address the short and long-term needs of the Home. This includes a short-term Refresh Project and this longer-term Rapid Planning Capital Project (www.mass.gov/HolyokeSHProject) for a future Soldiers' Home in Holyoke. While the expedited capital project will address long-term facility needs, the Executive Office of Health and Human Services, Department of Veterans' Services, and Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance have been addressing immediate capital needs, including a \$6 million refresh of units to significantly improve infection control for the residents and staff.
 - This bond bill is the next step of the expedited capital project, following the recommendations laid out in the [needs assessment report](#) that was released on Veterans Day, following the [Rapid Planning Phase](#). Payette Associates is the design firm leading the design and planning phase, building on the evaluation they previously completed, and developing a full project scope, refining the plan, confirming the budget, timelines, and ensuring conformity with the regulatory process. To meet the VA State Home Construction Grant's April 15, 2021 deadline, the bond bill must be enacted by mid-March, with a terms bill filed and enacted soon afterwards. The design development phase must be completed by August 1, 2021 to be eligible for this cycle of the grant program.
- The Soldiers' Home continues to work with Home Base, a veteran support organization that is a partnership of the Red Sox Foundation and Massachusetts General Hospital, to help improve the quality of life, increase psychosocial interventions to address isolation during the pandemic. Home Base has linked us to interactive virtual concerts provided by professional and amateur volunteers, featuring musical performances and conversation between the Veterans and musicians. The concerts occur every Tuesday and Thursday afternoon. The team at Home Base is working with Social Work, Recreation and Nursing to provide other opportunities for virtual activities. Home Base has extended their free veteran counseling offerings to our Soldier's Home families and staff.
- The Soldiers' Home in Holyoke is taking every precaution to mitigate COVID-19 entering and spreading at the Soldiers' Home in Holyoke. Based on guidance from DPH, and in consultation with infection control experts, the Home is continuing mandatory 2 times per week testing for all staff and residents. Increased testing frequency will allow us to detect COVID-19 early and will continue.
- In addition to mandatory testing at state-operated 24/7 facilities, daily symptom checking and routine staff surveillance testing are important tools to protect staff, residents and visitors and will remain in place until such time there is a medical breakthrough or a safe and effective vaccine for COVID 19. Staff who are not feeling well are instructed not to come to work and to contact their health care provider. If staff show any signs of COVID-symptoms, they are required to self-quarantine at home, per CDC guidance for health care workers.
- The Soldiers' Home in Holyoke has been intently focused on following infection control procedures and maintaining best practices for the safety of veteran residents and staff. All veteran residents' health is being monitored and retesting is being conducted for veterans both on- and off-site as clinically appropriate. The Soldiers' Home's medical team is making all clinical decisions following [the latest CDC guidance](#), which continues to evolve as the medical community learns more about this new virus.
- In June, the Baker-Polito Administration released the independent report ordered by Governor Baker to investigate the COVID-19 outbreak at Holyoke Soldiers' Home, and announced a series of reforms to

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strengthen its governance and oversight of the Home, improving staffing processes, providing quality care for our Veterans, and planning for significant capital improvements.

- The status of all residents as of March 9 is as follows:
 - Status:
 - 0 veteran residents are positive and not clinically recovered
 - 3 veteran residents are negative
 - 42 veteran residents have a pending test. Please note that all veteran residents and staff are now being tested twice weekly, which will increase the number of pending tests.
 - 74 veteran residents have been determined clinically recovered
 - 0 veteran residents have refused testing
 - Resident locations:
 - 117 veteran residents are onsite
 - 2 veteran residents are receiving acute care offsite
 - Since March 1, there have been 77 deaths of veteran residents who tested positive
 - Following the most recent staff surveillance testing
 - 1 employee is positive
 - All others who previously tested positive are clinically recovered

Chelsea Soldiers' Home Weekly Update (current as of 3/9/21)

- The Soldiers' Home in Chelsea has re-opened in-person visitation for veteran residents and their loved ones, starting February 10, 2021, and has since hosted 110 in-person visits with veterans.
- The Home is implementing updated guidance from DPH to ensure the safety and wellbeing of residents, staff, and those visiting. All visitors are screened and required to wear PPE and social distance, and negative test results are strongly encouraged before visiting. There is designated visitation space at each Home, and high touch surfaces are sanitized after each visit.
 - Visitation is taking place Monday through Friday 9:00am-7:30pm, and 8 slots will be offered each day; and Saturday & Sunday from 1pm-4pm, and 3 slots will be offered each day. Visits will be scheduled for at least 45 minutes long.
 - The Soldiers' Home in Chelsea will also continue to offer and support virtual visitation.
 - Families can request updates on their loved ones by contacting their assigned social worker, or emailing the Home at CSH@mass.gov. Medical information can only be shared with an authorized health care proxy.
- The Soldiers' Home in Chelsea hosted 3 onsite vaccination clinics, the last on February 9. The first and second vaccination clinics were held on December 29 and 30, and January 19 and 20. Following the completion of the onsite vaccination clinics:
 - 159 residents and 208 staff have received both doses
 - 6 veteran residents and 67 staff have received their first dose.
- The Home remains vigilant in its infection control, including enhanced precautions throughout the facility and strict infection control protocols to keep veteran residents and staff safe, including continuing staff education, screening, and testing.
- Clinical staff closely monitor any changes in residents, and the Soldiers' Home's medical team is making all clinical decisions following [the latest CDC guidance](#), which continues to evolve as the medical community learns more about this new virus. The CDC recommends making medical decisions regarding when to end isolation and determine that the patient has recovered based on symptoms and time elapsed.
- The Soldiers' Home in Chelsea currently weekly staff surveillance testing. In accordance with [CMS rules](#), the Soldiers' Home is now conducting weekly testing until the facility is 14 days without positive test results. These tests are provided at no cost to employees.

COVID-19 RESPONSE COMMAND CENTER WEEKLY SITUATION REPORT

- The Soldiers' Home in Chelsea monitors the PPE supply, and continues to receive shipments of PPE. The Incident Command team at the Chelsea Soldiers' Home continues to enforce staff use of personal protective equipment (PPE), as well as source PPE to ensure that residents and staff have access to critical safety equipment. The team continues to coordinate closely with the VA Health Care System.
- The status as of March 9 is as follows:
 - Residents
 - 0 veteran residents are positive
 - 126 veteran residents are negative
 - 48 veteran residents have recovered, meaning they previously tested positive and are now clinically recovered
 - 0 veteran residents have pending tests
 - Since March 1, there have been 31 deaths of veteran residents who tested positive
 - Following the most recent staff surveillance testing:
 - 0 employees are positive
 - All other employees who previously tested positive have been determined clinically recovered

Communications Resources

Public Messaging Resources for Communities:

The COVID-19 Command Center and DPH have produced many communication resources aimed at helping communities inform and educate residents on recent executive orders and guidance related to COVID-19.

New Resources:

- [Trust the Facts, Get the Vax Campaign Materials | Mass.gov](#)
- [COVID-19 Vaccine Posters | Mass.gov](#)
- [Preparing for your COVID-19 Vaccination Appointment flier | Mass.gov](#)
- [Guide to hosting a forum on the COVID-19 Vaccine | Mass.gov](#)

Visitors to COVID-19 resources for municipalities webpage will find these new resources, and additional flyers, posters, and digital resources in multiple languages on topics such as:

- [When can I get the COVID-19 vaccine?](#)
- [Vaccine Graphics](#)
- [Statewide guidelines, advisories, and orders](#)
- [Staying safe in the community](#)
- [Using local public alert systems for COVID-19 information](#)
- [Materials for Business](#), including:
 - Return to work guidance
 - Employee Screening Questionnaire
 - Business guidance – New, Temporary Capacity Limits
 - Updated safe store tips for retailers

Additional DPH Stop the Spread Materials in Multiple Languages

- [Facts Sheets](#)
- [Videos](#)



COVID-19 RESPONSE COMMAND CENTER WEEKLY SITUATION REPORT

Resources

MassSupport

MassSupport is the Massachusetts Crisis Counseling Program funded by the Federal Emergency Management Agency and managed in partnership between the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health and Riverside Trauma Center, a program of Riverside Community Care.

Contact MassSupport by phone at **888-215-4920** or by email at MassSupport@riversidecc.org

Red Cross Virtual Family Assistance Center

In order to provide support to families and communities who have suffered loss as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the American Red Cross has developed a Virtual Family Assistance Center (VFAC), staffed by a team of specially trained mental health, spiritual care, and health services volunteers who are:

- Connecting with families over the phone to offer condolences, emotional and spiritual support, and access to available resources
- Providing support for virtual memorial services for families, including connecting with local faith-based community partners
- Hosting online classes to foster resilience and facilitate coping skills
- Assisting families with access to national, state, or local resources such as grief counseling, legal resources, funeral information, financial information services, or veterans' assistance
- Additional state- and local-specific resources are available.

People can visit: <https://www.redcross.org/virtual-family-assistance-center/ma-family-assistance-center.html>

to access this resource with special virtual programs, information, referrals, and services to support families in need. People without internet access can **call toll-free 833-492-0094** for help. All Family Assistance Center support will be provided virtually and is completely confidential and free.

Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) now reports on the number of positive COVID-19 cases as reported to the DESE by school districts (including charter schools), collaboratives, and approved special education schools. The data only represents what has been reported to DESE. For more information and to view the report people can visit: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/positive-cases/>

COVID-19 Test Site Locator

MEMA, in conjunction with the COVID-19 Command Center, has developed an [interactive tool](#) that shows the locations of COVID-19 testing sites around the Commonwealth.

Massachusetts COVID-19 Response Dashboard

MEMA has developed and maintains a public-facing COVID-19 ArcGIS Online dashboard, available [here](#). This dashboard is continuously updated and captures information about current COVID 19 case counts, cases by age, cases by county, hospital status, hospital bed status, death tolls, and deaths by age. Users should refresh the dashboard daily as enhancements are continuously being added.

Health care facilities can learn more about [requesting personal protective equipment here](#).

Stay Informed

- Get information from trusted sources. Get notified by text, email, or phone call in your preferred language. Visit <https://member.everbridge.net/index/406686158291020/#/signup> to sign-up for **AlertsMA** for the latest news on the Commonwealth's response to COVID-19

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- Take care of your emotional health:
- Call 2-1-1 and choose the “CALL2TALK” option.
- Samaritans is continuing operations 24/7, as always. During this unprecedented time, it can feel overwhelming to receive constant messages about COVID-19. Call or text their 24/7 helpline any time at 877-870-4673.
- The Disaster Distress Helpline, 1-800-985-5990, is a 24/7, 365-day-a-year, national hotline dedicated to providing immediate crisis counseling for people who are experiencing emotional distress related to any natural or human-caused disaster, including disease outbreaks like COVID-19. This toll-free, multilingual, and confidential crisis support service is available to all residents in the United States and its territories.

How to Help Out

- [Donate](#) to the Massachusetts COVID-19 Relief Fund

The Need for Blood Donations Continues, and Recovered COVID-19 Donors Can Help Save Lives

In coordination with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the Red Cross is seeking people who are fully recovered from the new coronavirus to sign up to donate plasma to help current COVID-19 patients. People who have fully recovered from COVID-19 have antibodies in their plasma that can attack the virus. This convalescent plasma is being evaluated as treatment for patients with serious or immediately life-threatening COVID-19 infections, or those judged by a healthcare provider to be at high risk of progression to severe or life-threatening condition. Interested individuals can visit [RedCrossBlood.org/plasma4covid](https://www.RedCrossBlood.org/plasma4covid) to learn more. The Red Cross follows the highest standards of safety and infection control, and volunteer donors are the only source of blood for those in need. To make an appointment to donate, please visit www.RedCrossBlood.org