Thursday, March 26, 2020
COVID-19 Response Command Center
Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency

Situation Update

State Actions in Today's Report:

- New Case Information Released (Link in sidebar.)
- Gov. Baker Seeks Major Disaster Declaration
- Former Hospital Designated To Care For Homeless Residents
- New Public Health Orders Issued
- PPE Update From The Command Center
- EOEEA & EOHED Permit Extension Order
- Ensuring Access to Personal Care Attendant Services
- Division of Insurance COVID-19 Related Bulletins
- Continuing Need for Red Cross Blood Donations

Helpful Links:

- Mass.Gov/covid19
- Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency
- Unemployment & COVID-19
- Dept. Of Transitional Assistance Online Portal
- Emergency Childcare Site
- MBTA.com/covid19
- Complete List of Emergency Orders & Guidance

New Resource Highlight:

MA Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
MCDHH has created a visual tool to help hospital staff, medical personnel, first responders, and service providers communicate with hard of hearing and Deaf individuals and patients during this unprecedented crisis. (**Get The Tool**)

Background on the Command Center:

On March 10, 2020, Governor Charlie Baker declared a State of Emergency to support the Commonwealth's response to coronavirus.

On March 14, the Baker-Polito Administration announced the creation of a new COVID-19 Response Command Center. Secretary Marylou Sudders is leading the cross-secretariat response to the outbreak. The Command Center is the Commonwealth's single point of strategic decision making and coordination for the Administration's comprehensive COVID-19 response.

In support of the Command Center, the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) in Framingham has activated to Level 2 (Partial Activation). In addition, MEMA's Regional EOCs in Tewksbury, New Bedford, and Agawam have also been partially activated to support local communities.

Situation in Numbers

Massachusetts current as of 3/26

2,417 Total Cases (click for more information)

25 Deaths (click to read today's news release)

23,621 patients tested to date by MA State Public Health Laboratory, hospitals and commercial laboratories. (+3,827 since 3/25)

United States current as of 3/26

Case numbers are updated regularly at noon Mondays through Fridays.

Total Cases Reported to CDC*:

**CDC updates national numbers Mon.-Fri. by 4pm. Includes Confirmed & Presumptive Positive*

68,440 Total Cases
636 Travel-Related
1,074 Close Contact
68,440 Under Investigation

994 Deaths

54 Jurisdictions Reporting Cases
(50 states, D.C., Puerto Rico, Guam, and US V.I.)

Social Distancing Basics:

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

If you go out:

- ✓ Avoid crowds
- ✓ Stay 6 feet away from others
- ✓ Don't shake hands or hug

COVID-19 RESPONSE COMMAND CENTER
DAILY SITUATION REPORT

State Actions Today

At a 2:00 pm press conference, Governor Baker, Lt. Governor Polito, and Secretary Sudders provided several updates and announcements: (**News Release**) | (**Video of Today's Briefing**)

Major Disaster Declaration Request:
Governor Baker today submitted a request to the federal government for a Major Disaster Declaration for Massachusetts. If approved, this declaration would provide the Commonwealth additional federal assistance beyond what was included in the Emergency Declaration declared by President Trump on March 13, 2020. The disaster declaration request includes a request for FEMA's Public Assistance Program, which would make financial assistance available to cities and towns, state agencies, and certain non-profits statewide. The disaster declaration request also requests FEMA's Individual Assistance Program including Disaster Unemployment Assistance and Crisis Counseling Assistance to help support residents in need during this unprecedented incident. Read the Letter.

Former Boston Medical Center Building To Be Used To Care For Homeless Residents:

- To ensure the care and safety of the Boston area's homeless population during the COVID-19 epidemic, the Baker-Polito Administration today announced that a former Boston Medical Center hospital building will be temporarily reopened and used to meet COVID-19 related medical needs of area homeless residents.
- The building, known as **Newton Pavilion**, is currently owned by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The new facility will be operated by a consortium of providers, including Boston Medical Center, Boston Healthcare for the Homeless, shelters including the Pine Street Inn, and the City of Boston's COVID-19 response team. (News Release)

New Public Health Orders:
The Department of Public Health has issued three emergency orders to support the health care system's response to COVID-19:

- Pharmacy Practice: To ensure pharmacists are able to fully support the health care system's response to COVID-19, this emergency order makes several changes regarding pharmacy practice, including expedited approval for pharmacists licensed in other states to practice in Massachusetts, and allowing the remote processing of prescriptions by pharmacy technicians. Read the Order
- Determination of Need: This emergency order exempts health care facilities from the requirement that they submit a Notice of Determination of Need for certain activities that will support their response to COVID-19. Read the Order | Read the Guidance
- Nurse Staffing: To ensure hospitals have the flexibility they need to respond to the COVID-19 outbreak, this emergency order exempts hospitals from certain nurse-staffing requirements, while requiring that they must ensure that staffing levels remain adequate to meet patients' needs, and staff is trained and competent to meet the needs of their patients. Read the Order

Update on Personal Protective Equipment:
At today's press briefing with Governor Baker, Secretary Sudders provided an update on the Command Centers continuing efforts to secure Personal Protective Equipment for health care provider and other essential COVID-19 responders.

- Yesterday, MEMA shipped 37 deliveries of PPE to Sheriff's departments, local fire and police and other agencies across the commonwealth. 66 total shipments from MEMA have gone out since March 23rd

- Also yesterday, DPH prepared 31 shipments of PPE and other medical supplies from the Strategic National Stockpile. To date, DPH has sent 84 shipments of supplies from the Strategic National Stockpile to medical providers across the Commonwealth
- In addition, DPH sent testing swabs to 55 sampling sites (e.g. hospitals, community health clinics) to enable them to continue collecting patients' samples to send to labs for testing
- This week alone, more than 28k masks, over 120k pairs of gloves have been distributed
- The Commonwealth has placed orders for >$50M in PPE and working with suppliers to expedited shipping into Massachusetts
- DPH has requested additional supplies from the Strategic National Stockpile; to date, less than 17% of our requests to SNS have been filled.

EOEEA & EOHED Permit Order:
Governor Baker issued an emergency order that provides that a permit will not expire or lapse during the state of emergency for most permits issued by agencies within the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs and the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development. The order also pauses deadlines for these agencies to decide or hold hearings on permit applications. The clock on those deadlines will resume 45 days after the end of the emergency. It also ensures that no permit is automatically issued because an agency is unable to make a decision on a permit application during the emergency.

Ensuring Access to Personal Care Attendant (PCA) Services:
The Administration worked with the advocacy community and union partners to implement solutions to ensure access to PCA services for individuals with disabilities and older adults during this public health emergency. MassHealth created a hotline through MassOptions for MassHealth members to call if they are in need of services, and updated its policies to streamline the hiring process and allow more flexibility for PCAs to work more hours.

- PCA services are essential services that support individuals with activities of daily living (ADLs), such as dressing, grooming, bathing, ambulating
- Consumers can call **1-844-422-6277** to be connected to home health services in their region.

Additional State Agency Updates Today:

Division of Insurance
The Division of Insurance issued the following bulletins today:

- Guidance to insurance carriers about providing flexibility in the administration of prescription drug benefits
- Guidance to insurance carriers about making COVID-19 information available to covered members

Other Important Information

American Red Cross Facing Severe Blood Shortage
The COVID-19 virus has caused the cancellation of blood drives across the Commonwealth. There is an urgent need ***now*** for patients with chronic conditions and trauma, as well as ensuring an adequate blood and blood product supply ***going forward***. The Governor has deemed "Blood and plasma donors and the employees of the organizations that operate and manage related activities" as an essential service. Support is needed to communicate to your residents that the need is urgent, and donating is a necessity to supply the hospitals with the blood our neighbors require. Donating blood is safe and people should not hesitate to give. In addition,

there is a need for community blood drive sites in the eastern part of the state. Identifying donation sites is vital to meet the demand as we go forward. Local knowledge, suggestions of sites, and potential partners are crucial to meeting the needs of our neighbors who need blood and blood products.

To schedule a new blood drive contact Bill Forsyth at (617) 699-3808 or email William.Forsyth@redcross.org.

Those who are healthy, feeling well and eligible to give blood or platelets are urged to make an appointment to donate as soon as possible by using the Red Cross Blood Donor App, visiting RedCrossBlood.org, or calling 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767).

Stay Informed

- Get information from trusted sources. Visit https://www.mass.gov/covid19 for the latest news, case counts, and lab testing results.
- Call 2-1-1 with questions
- Text the keyword **COVIDMA to 888-777** to receive notifications to your phone
- Take care of your emotional health and help others do the same. If you need emotional support during these stressful times:
    - 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.

Communications Resources:

- New DPH Flyer/Infographic on reducing stress & coping with fear of COVID-19
- New DMH resources on maintaining Emotional Health & Well-Being
- New Social Distancing (youth and general) infographic released on website.
- Social Distancing messages are now on billboards and will soon be available on public transit. They are also now translated into multiple languages.
- MCDHH visual tool for communicating with hard of hearing and Deaf individuals.

COVID-2019 infographic for posting in all public places: https://www.mass.gov/doc/stop-the-spread-of-germs-respiratory-diseases-like-flu-and-covid-19/download

Social media – follow and retweet DPH on Twitter @MassDPH, updated several times per day.