

B . C . B . O . H . A .

BERKSHIRE COUNTY BOARDS OF HEALTH ASSOCIATION

Pittsfield, MA June 8, 2020

Update on COVID-19 (Coronavirus) and Local Boards of Health (LBOH)

Please note: This is a rapidly evolving situation. Cases continue to rise slowly in Berkshire County. The rate of increase is almost flat and hospitalizations have fallen significantly. Cases continue to rise slowly elsewhere in the Commonwealth, but hospitalizations, percentage testing positive and number of people seeking testing have fallen. The Commonwealth is currently in Phase 2 of reopening. BCBOHA will continue to provide updates and coordinate public messaging on the situation on a regular basis. Please share this information with your other municipal officials, boards and departments.

Latest News:

Reopening Phase II

On June 6, Governor Baker announced that Phase 2 would commence on Monday, June 8, 2020. Governor Baker had previously released an Executive Order on June 1, 2020 updating reopening phases with details on additional sectors, including topics such as allowing Phase II enterprises to begin preparations to resume in advance of Phase II, rules required in advance of resuming amateur sports, and outdoor dining. The order allowed Phase II businesses to reopen their physical workplaces to workers only to conduct preparations in advance of the start of Phase II, which can include activities such as completing a COVID-19 Control Plan, implementing sector-specific protocols, and complying with Mandatory Workplace Safety Standards. For the full executive order, click [HERE](#). For general business guidance, as well as templates for required plans and poster, please click [HERE](#). Sector specific protocols and best practices can also be found at that link. In addition, information about outdoor recreational programs and activities can be found [HERE](#).

Updated List of Enterprises in Phases II, III, and IV

Governor Baker, as part of the executive order in advance of Phase II, released updated commentary providing guidance for industries opening in Phases II, III, and IV. All of the information included in this update is subject to change based on the latest public health data. Each phase will last a minimum of three weeks but could last longer depending on public health data and indicators. Each phase may also contain multiple steps that stagger the reopening dates for businesses and activities within that phase. For the updated list of businesses and commentary, click [HERE](#).

Limits on Visitors in Long Term Care Facilities During the COVID-19 Outbreak

The DPH released a memorandum on June 1st that replaced a memorandum issued on March 16, 2020 and is effective as of June 3, 2020. The memorandum states that Long Term Care (LTC) Facilities may allow visits with residents to occur, provided that physical distancing and protection requirements described in detail within the memorandum are followed. LTC facilities may allow in person visitations in a designated outdoor space with restrictions that are scheduled in advance. LTC facilities may limit the length of any visit, the days in which the visits occur, and the number of times during a day or week a resident may be visited. Special visitation practices for compassionate care may also be used, including situations not limited to an end-of-life. Considerations for compassionate care visits are also detailed in the DPH memorandum. BCBOHA has provided the memorandum as an attachment to this week's BOH memo.

Recreational Camps and Programs Health and Safety Checklist for Phase II

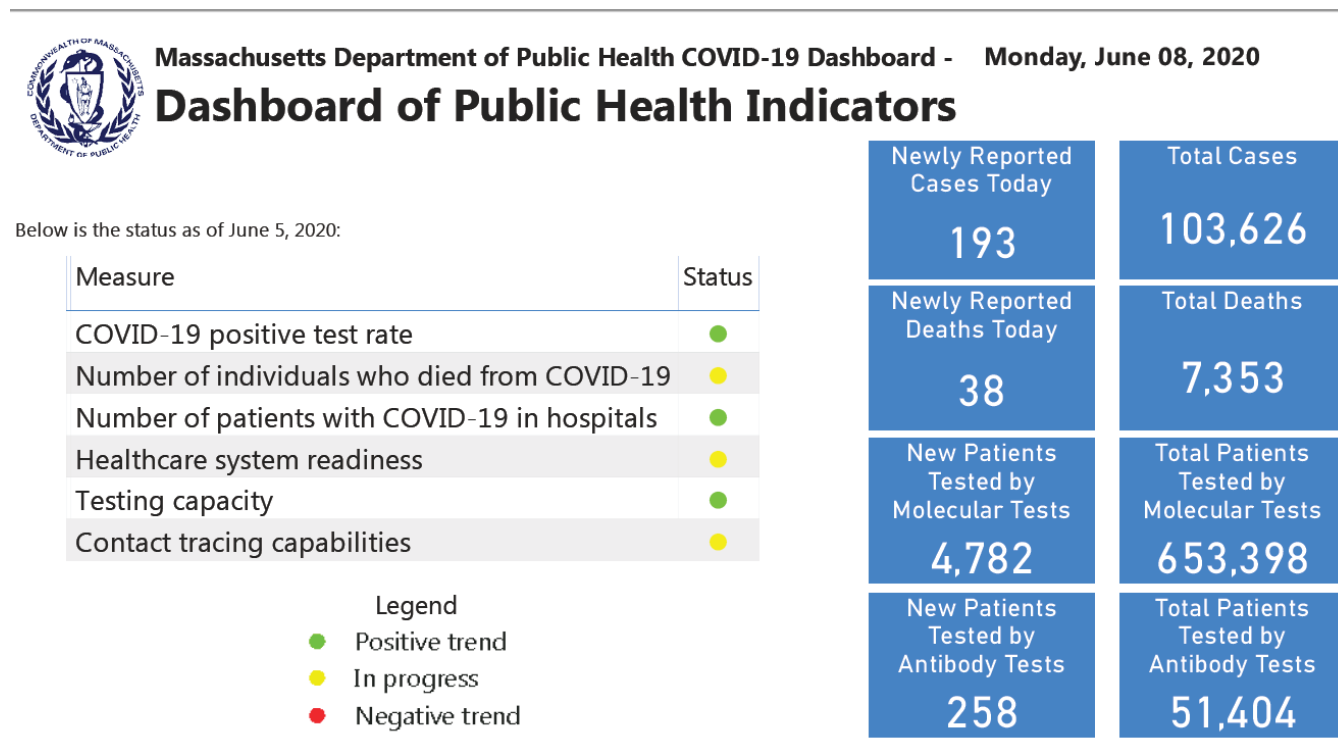
The Baker Administrations and the Department of Public Health release a checklist for recreational camps and programs detailing requirements related to staffing and operations, social distancing and group sizes, hygiene and handwashing, PPE and face masks/coverings, screening and monitoring, isolation and discharge, cleaning, disinfecting, and sanitizing, transportation and travel, and food service and safety. Information on summer camps can be found attached to this memo. Please note that guidance is being updated and make sure you are using the most recent guidance.

Minimum Health and Safety Requirements for Child and Youth Serving Programs

The Department of Early Education and Care partnered with the Executive Office of Health and Human Services, DPH, Department of Children and Families, and Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to issue an extensive document outlining health and safety requirements for programs in Massachusetts that serve children and youth. More information can be found [HERE](#).

DPH COVID-19 Dashboard, Changes to Data

As of June 1, 2020, the DPH began reporting both confirmed and probable COVID-19 cases and deaths. This change reflects guidance from the CDC to include “probable” COVID-19 cases and deaths in data collection and reporting efforts. This change will significantly increase the number of cases and deaths reported in Massachusetts. As of June 1, case and death reports will include numbers that are the result of a retrospective review of probable cases and death dating back to March 1, 2020. Probable Cases are defined as individuals who have not been tested by the standard viral test, but have either 1) had a positive antibody test and either had COVID symptoms or were likely to be exposed to a positive case or 2) did not have an antibody test but had COVID symptoms and were known to be exposed to a positive case. For more information on probable case definitions and data collection, please view the first page of the daily COVID 19 dashboard [HERE](#).





Confirmed and Probable Case Breakdown

Confirmed

Newly Reported
Confirmed Cases
Today

193

Total Confirmed
Cases

99,755

Newly Reported
Deaths among
Confirmed Today

38

Total Deaths
among Confirmed
Cases

7,217

Probable

Newly Reported
Probable Cases
Today

0

Total Probable
Cases

3,871

Newly Reported
Deaths among
Probable Today

0

Total Deaths
among Probable
Cases

136

Patients with a positive molecular test for COVID-19 are counted as confirmed.

Patients with a positive serology/antibody test and either COVID-like symptoms or likely exposure to COVID-19 are counted as probable cases.

Patients who did not have a laboratory test but whose death certificate listed COVID-19 as a cause of death are counted as probable deaths.

Probable cases are included in all counts from March 1 onward.

For more information on Confirmed and Probable case definitions, see https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.cste.org/resource/resmgr/2020ps/Interim-20-ID-01_COVID-19.pdf



Data Sources: COVID-19 Data provided by the Bureau of Infectious Disease and Laboratory Sciences, and the Registry of Vital Records and Statistics; Tables and Figures created by the Office of Population Health.
Note: all data are current as of 10:00am.

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Other Recent Updates and Guidance:

Reopening Massachusetts Training Documents for Phase 1

The Massachusetts COVID-19 Response Command Center released training resources for employers for Phase 1 on May 21, 2020. This document is intended to provide LBOHs with training resources for employers who are subject to the mandatory safety standards for workplaces and consists of materials compiled from federal and non-Massachusetts state government sources. BCBOHA has shared this document as an attachment with this memo.

BCBOHA Job Aids

BCBOHA has been working on checklists and job aids to assist Boards of Health and their businesses to reopen. The job aids can be found [HERE](#).

Safety Standards for Reopening Parks, Open Space, and Outdoor Education Programs

The Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs released a detailed memo with guidelines on opening parks, open space, and outdoor education programs during MA Reopening Phase 1. Guidelines include details about the use of face coverings and masks, group sizes, the use of athletic fields and courts, picnic and grill areas, trash disposal, public restrooms, dog walking and dog parks, community gardens, and more. Click [HERE](#) for the detailed guidelines.

Farm Pick Your Own/Agricultural Tourism Activities

The Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR) released a bulletin outlining guidance for the fruit and vegetable farming community who engage in farm visit activities, such as pick-you-own operations. This guidance covers concerns around foodborne exposure to COVID-19, social distancing, activity plans, communication to customers, the use of face coverings and masks, and more. This guidance can be found [HERE](#). In addition, MDAR also released a bulletin outlining guidance for farm labor management, which can be found [HERE](#).

Mold and Legionella Considerations for Reopening

The Department of Public Health released guidance on May 21, 2020 outlining considerations and guidance for addressing mold and Legionella. The temporary shut down of a building and reductions in normal water use can create mold and Legionella hazards and building owners and employers should ensure that their building does not have mold in the water system. Guidance on how to check for potential hazards can be found on the CDC website CDC [HERE](#).

Updates on Outdoor Classes

The DPH provided additional guidance for outdoor classes, including gym, yoga, dance, and personal fitness classes. These classes may be held while following strict rules:

- 6 feet of separation between participants
- 12 feet of separation between activity stations
- Face coverings must be worn at all times
- No shared equipment, tools or materials
- Gathering must be less than 10 people, including staff/instructors
- Class must have pre-registration process
- Temporary signage needs to be in place
- All equipment must be disinfected after use

Updates on Driving Schools

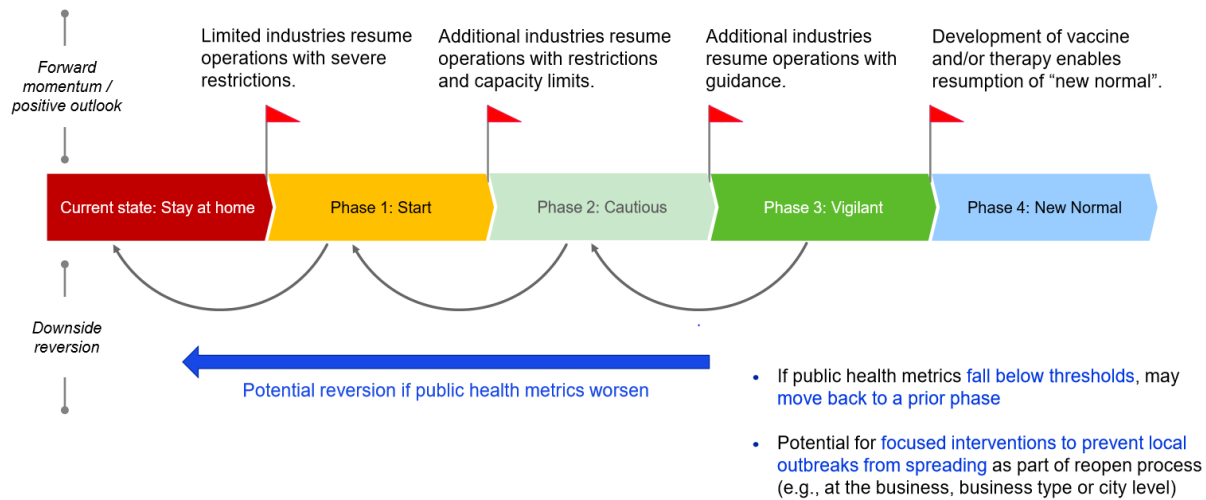
Driving schools are currently allowed to offer classroom instruction online in Phase 1 of the reopening of Massachusetts. In phase 2, driving schools will be able to provide behind-the-wheel training or the observation of student drivers. The Registry of Motor Vehicles is developing comprehensive guidance for permit testing, road tests, and driving schools. More updates to come.

Reopening Massachusetts

On May 18th, Governor Baker and the Reopening Advisory Board, chaired by Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito and Secretary of Housing and Economic Development Mike Kennealy, released a four-phase plan to reopen Massachusetts. Reopening will be driven by public health metrics and data trends that will inform the state's ability to move into the next phases and return to previous phases when appropriate. The Reopening Advisory Board recommends that all residents continue to cover their faces, wash hands, socially distance, be vigilant for symptoms of COVID-19, and stay at home if they feel sick. Additionally, all high-risk individuals should continue to work from home if possible through Phase 3, and continue to socially distance in Phase 4.

- For the full report, click [HERE](#).
- More information on mandatory safety standards can be found [here](#).

Four-Phase Approach to Reopening Massachusetts



Reopening: 6 Key Public Health Indicators, now Reported Daily on the DPH Dashboard

The status of 6 key public health indicators will be published daily on the DPH COVID-19 Dashboard.

Safer at Home Advisory: Cover, Wash, Distance, Vigilance

The Baker Administration released a Safer at Home Advisory on May 18th to accompany the Reopening Massachusetts strategy. This advisory includes special information for individuals over the age of 65, and those at high risk for COVID-19. This advisory replaces the stay at home advisory previously issued. For the full advisory, click [HERE](#).

Updates for Child Care Services:

As part of the Reopening Massachusetts Plan, childcare and summer recreational camps will reopen in a phased approach. The Department of Early Education and Care and DPH are in the process of developing guidelines that balance families' need for childcare with health and safety. Recreational day camps are expected to open on a phased basis in Phase 2 and residential day camps in Phase 3. BCBOHA will continue to share any new information available on this topic.

Reopening Plan Template

On May 18th, the Advisory Board released a COVID-19 Control Plan Template for businesses. All businesses in Massachusetts must develop a written control plan outlining how its workplace will comply with the mandatory safety standards for operation in the COVID-19 reopening period. Control plans do NOT need to be submitted for approval but must be kept on the premises and made available in the case of an inspection or outbreak. See and download the plan template [HERE](#).

Enforcement of Reopening Requirements

Although the orders are issued by DPH, as a practical matter the primary enforcers of essential business orders are the local boards of health and their agents. If necessary, local health officials can call on state or local law enforcement to help enforce the order. It is expected that police presence will be limited and will be required only when a compliance issue presents an immediate threat to health and safety or the risk of a violent confrontation. Enforcement guidelines for reopening are attached to this memo. Boards of Health should contact the Department of Labor Standards (DLS) for assistance as needed and may be contacted by DLS if a complaint is made to the state. Neither DLS nor the LBOH is required to inspect

prior to a business reopening. Neither DLS nor the local board of health has authority to close a business for violation of a COVID-19 workplace safety standard although they may revoke a permit or close a business pursuant to other regulations or local ordinances. Where continued non-compliance with a COVID-19 workplace safety standard warrants the closing of a business, the local board of health or DLS must first seek a court injunction. Local boards of health can request enforcement assistance and interpretive guidance by calling the DLS hotline: (508) 616-0461 x9488 or by sending an email to safepublicworkplacemailbox@mass.gov.

High School Graduations

Guidance on High School Graduations was released by the state on Friday May 22. Prior to July 19, recommending only virtual or other extremely limited ceremonies (e.g., drive by parades). Outdoor ceremonies are recommended to be held after July 19 if guidelines are followed. However, the ban on gatherings over 10 people does not apply to unconfined outdoor spaces.

Updates to Testing Eligibility for COVID-19

The DPH released new guidance that expands testing recommendations for individuals eligible for COVID-19 testing, especially for individuals who are close contacts of confirmed COVID cases. The DPH recommends that all individuals in Massachusetts identified as a close contact by a Local BOH, the MA DPH, the Community Tracing Collaborative, or a healthcare provider should be tested. A close contact is defined as a person who has been within 6 feet of a COVID-19 case for at least 10-15 minutes. Close contact can occur while caring for, living with, visiting, or sharing a healthcare waiting room area or room with a COVID-19 case while the case was symptomatic or within the 48 hours before symptom onset. Close contact can also occur if an individual has direct contact with infectious secretions of a COVID-19 case (e.g., being coughed on) while not wearing recommended PPE. The DPH has also updated the list of COVID-19 testing sites. Information on expanded testing guidelines, as well as the most up-to-date list of COVID-19 testing sites can be found [here](#). The Public Health Nurses now have a “test pass” that they can provide to any contact needing a test.

ADA Compliance

The Massachusetts Office on Disabilities (MOD) reminds municipalities that even in a crisis, people with disabilities should continue to have equal access to services, work, education, and community without discrimination or increased safety risks due to COVID-19. Communication about COVID-19 and related programs should consider the potential ways that people with sensory, learning, and cognitive disabilities will access this information and take steps to ensure that communication methods are effective. If point of distribution locations for food or personal protective equipment are established, please address how these supplies will be distributed to people whose ability to drive, lift, carry or whose use of public transportation is limited, to ensure that people with disabilities can equally access those services. MOD can be contacted for technical assistance.

The Academic Public Health Volunteer Corps (APHVC) Public Health Services

The APHVC is a program of the Academic Health Department Consortium, with a mission to leverage public health students, alumni, and expert volunteers to augment, amplify, and promote local public health efforts in Massachusetts. Services that the volunteers can provide include assistance with health communications of all mediums, community outreach, translation services, data analysis and presentation, policy and protocols, mobilizing and supporting partnerships. Please see the attached document for more information.

CARES Act Funding

Massachusetts has received approximately \$2.7 billion as part of the Federal CARES Act funding. The Governor announced on May 14 that about \$502 million of this funding will be distributed to

municipalities through local aid channels, and is meant for all COVID- related municipal expenses, including overtime costs associated with police, fire and EMS as well as other municipal costs related to COVID, including schools, public works and public health. Municipalities will be able to request funding to cover FY 20 deficits and will have an opportunity to request FY 21 funds at a later date. Under federal law, eligible uses must meet three conditions: costs must be 1) “necessary expenditures incurred due to the public health emergency with respect to ...COVID–19” and may not be used to substitute for lost revenue; 2) Not budgeted as of March 27, 2020 when the CARES Act was enacted and may not supplant state or municipal spending; and 3) Incurred on or after March 1, 2020, up to December 30, 2020. Boards of Health that have incurred eligible costs are encouraged to proactively reach out to their chief elected official or town administrator/town manager. **Please note that the initial deadline for CARES Act funding has been extended to June 12.** More information can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

Masks and Face Coverings Order

Effective May 6, 2020, any person over the age of 2 years, in any place open to the public in Massachusetts, whether indoors or outdoors, and who is not able or does not otherwise maintain a distance of six feet from all others, shall be required to cover their mouth and nose with a mask or cloth face covering. Those who are unable to wear a mask due to a medical condition are exempted and are not required to show proof of their medical condition. The order pertains to all customers and workers in businesses and other organizations open to the public, including grocery stores, pharmacies and other retail stores, as well as in taxis, mass transit and other transportation, including in waiting areas or transit stops. Businesses may exclude customers or workers who refuse to follow this order. People are discouraged from wearing medical grade masks as those should be reserved for medical personnel and first responders. Additional information and resources may be found [HERE](#). Joint guidance issued by the MA Office of the Attorney General and the Massachusetts Chiefs of Police Association on the order is attached and may be shared with your first responders and other municipal officials.

Legal Questions

The Massachusetts Association of Health Boards (MAHB) has been contracted to provide legal guidance to local boards of health on COVID-related matters. Documents and FAQ can be found on the MAHB website [HERE](#). These answers are meant for educational purposes only and do not constitute individual legal advice. Boards of Health should also consult their town counsel for specific legal advice. MAHB also has available answers to health-related questions and best practices [HERE](#).

Testing in Congregate Care Settings

Due to the high number of cases in congregate care settings, especially nursing homes, but including group homes and assisted living, many congregate care sites are undergoing global testing of staff and residents. In Berkshire County, some of this testing is done through Berkshire Health Systems, in conjunction with County Ambulance, and in this case results are provided to the local board of health through their public health nurse as soon as they are available. Other facilities have chosen to have the testing done through other providers. In these cases the local board of health is encouraged to be in touch with facilities in their municipality and to proactively ask for results as soon as they come in as there may otherwise be a significant delay in obtaining results through MAVEN.

Other Updates

Farmers Market Orders

The DPH Commissioner has released a set of 17 orders for the operation of farmers markets across the Commonwealth. The orders provide guidance related to numbers of customers within the market at one time, social distancing protocols, signage, enforcement, cleaning and disinfecting procedures, bagging of produce, and more. In addition, market managers, staff, and vendors **MUST** use face coverings or masks and disposable gloves at all times during market operations. The order can be found [HERE](#).

Limiting Access to Senior High-Rise and Mid-Rise Developments

The Department of Housing and Community Development has released guidance on restricting access to senior housing to help minimize the spread of COVID-19. If municipalities enact restrictions the housing authority is encouraged to work with their local BOH. More guidance can be found [HERE](#).

Data Reporting from DPH

The DPH COVID-19 webpage now provides case data broken down by city/town updated every Wednesday. To maintain patient privacy, data are only available for municipalities with ≥ 5 cases. These case reports are according to DPH records & may occasionally differ from municipal reports due to confusion on addresses (particularly where towns share a zip code) or where someone is incorrectly reported in a municipality in which they do not live. DPH is now providing patient census by hospital daily. **In addition, DPH is now providing information on testing on a municipal basis.** Access reports [HERE](#). The table below shows Berkshire County data (updated 6/8/20; Boston Globe's numbers).

Adams	35	New Ashford	0
Alford	<5	New Marlborough	6
Becket	12	North Adams*	46
Cheshire	<5	Otis	<5
Clarksburg	7	Peru	<5
Dalton*	9	Pittsfield*	168
Egremont	5	Richmond	5
Florida	<5	Sandisfield*	<5
Great Barrington*	72	Savoy	<5
Hancock	<5	Sheffield	15
Hinsdale	<5	Stockbridge	14
Lanesboro	8	Tyringham	<5
Lee*	18	Washington	<5
Lenox*	13	West Stockbridge	5
Monterey	0	Williamstown*	83
Mount Washington	0	Windsor	0
* Indicates long term care (LTC) facility located in the municipality. Approximately 21% of cases of COVID in MA are among residents and staff of LTC facilities, and approximately 60% of total deaths of COVID in MA are among LTC. It is important to note that case numbers at LTC can appear to skew an individual community's case numbers. An asterisk does NOT indicate that a particular LTC has COVID cases or deaths of COVID.			

DPH COVID-19 Dashboard

In addition to reporting city/town specific data, the Department of Public Health has begun posting new tables, graphs, and other data points related to COVID-19, found [HERE](#). The Dashboard features data such as daily confirmed cases, testing, hospitalizations, deaths, data broken down by age group, PPE distribution, and data related to nursing homes. The dashboard is updated daily.

Updated Quarantine and Isolation Notices in 10 Languages

DPH has updated Quarantine and Isolation resources. They can be found [HERE](#).

Information for Local Boards of Health

MDPH has created a page for COVID-19 information specific to Local Boards of Health [HERE](#), which includes emergency directives, resources for public communication, and frequently asked questions.

Berkshire County Emergency Operations:

The Northern Berkshire Operations Center, the Southern Berkshire REPC, and the Central Berkshire COVID-19 Coordinating Center are activated and working jointly to address needs across the County.

- **North Berkshire Operations Center**

Operations Hotline: 413-662-3614 (8-5 weekdays, leave msg after hours).

Email: nbcovid@gmail.com

- **Central Berkshire Covid-19 Coordinating Center**

Phone: (413) 770-7663 (weekdays, not yet taking calls from the public or the media).

Email: cbcovidOC@gmail.com

- **Southern Berkshire Regional Emergency Planning Committee (REPC)**

The Southern Berkshire REPC is stood up and participating in information sharing with the Central County Coordinating Center and the North Berkshire Operations Center. The SBREPC is not taking inquiries from the public or media. The SBREPC can be reached at sbrepc@gmail.com.

COVID-19 Response Command Center

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.

COVID-19 Testing in Berkshire County:

The drive-through testing facility at Berkshire Medical Center is currently operational. **In addition, part time locations for testing have been opened at Fairview Hospital in Great Barrington and at the North Adams campus of BMC. Antibody testing is also available at BMC.** Most testing requires a physician order. Symptomatic individuals may call the BMC hotline at 855-BMC-LINK, OR 855-262-5465. After hotline screening, those qualified will be referred for a telemedicine appointment with a physician, and if appropriate, given an order and a time for testing.

Questions from the General Public and Worried-Well

The Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) and United Way 211 call and information service is now operating 24/7 and is answering calls for community members who are not sick but would like to receive information related to COVID-19. Residents across the state can also sign up for the new text notification system including updates, news and prevention information by texting COVIDMA to 888-777. Also encourage your residents to sign up for your municipalities outgoing-911 alert system (such as Code Red, Reverse911, or similar).

For those needing emotional support during these stressful times:

- o Call 2-1-1 and choose the “CALL2TALK” option.
- o Call or text Samaritans 24/7 helpline at 877-870-4673.
- o 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 US and territories.

The Town of Great Barrington has also made available a mental health and wellness toolkit available on their website [HERE](#) (PDF).

Communication resources for the public available from the MA DPH include:

- DPH Flyer/Infographic on reducing stress & coping with fear of COVID-19: Click [HERE](#).
- DMH resources on maintaining Emotional Health & Well-Being: Click [HERE](#).
- New Social Distancing infographics: Click here for [YOUTH](#) & [GENERAL](#).
- COVID-2019 infographic for posting in all public places: [DOWNLOAD](#).

Situation Report:

Recently, a new strain of coronavirus—2019 Novel (new) Coronavirus (COVID-19)—was detected in Wuhan, China. This novel coronavirus causes a respiratory (lung) infection. This new virus is related to, but different from, other coronaviruses that cause the common cold and diseases such as SARS and MERS. Common symptoms of COVID-19 are fever, cough, shortness of breath and in severe cases, pneumonia (fluid in the lungs). Cases range from very mild to severe.

As of June 1, there have been 101,592 cases of COVID-19 in Massachusetts, of which 539 are in Berkshire County. There are signs that the number of cases is flattening throughout the state at this time and that the peak of this surge has passed. The number of people tested in Massachusetts has increased to approximately 614,133. There have been 7,152 deaths in Massachusetts, with 40 of those deaths in Berkshire County. In Massachusetts, a significant majority of deaths have been in individuals over the age of 80, and almost all of those where known (98%) have had underlying health conditions that put them at increased risk. There have been 1,827,425 reported cases in the United States as of June 3rd, and 106,202 deaths. Although data is largely missing, it appears that there are significant racial and ethnic disparities in COVID cases and deaths.

Updated daily information on Massachusetts’ case reports can be found [HERE](#).

Updated daily information (Monday-Friday) on US cases can be found [HERE](#).

MDPH Information on COVID-19: <https://www.mass.gov/covid-19>

HMCC Resources: <https://region1hmcc.org/>

CDC General Information Page on COVID-19: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

CDC Communication Resources: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/index.html>

MDPH Printable Fact Sheets: Click [HERE](#). [Seem more like links to web pages than actual downloads]

CDC Response Page: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/summary.html#cdc-response>

CDC Cases in the US: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/cases-in-us.html>

CDC Guidance for Medical Professionals: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/hcp/index.html>

CDC Information on Travel: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>

CDC Information for Businesses & Travelers: Click [HERE](#) (last updated 5/6/20)