

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

## BERKSHIRE COUNTY BOARDS OF HEALTH ASSOCIATION

Pittsfield, MA September 1, 2020

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

**There continue to be relatively few new COVID cases in Berkshire County, most related to travel outside the county. There is some limited community spread. False positive results are being recognized. Cases, percentage testing positive, hospitalizations and deaths continue at low levels elsewhere in the Commonwealth as well, with rates of positive tests below 2% for over a month and at or below 1% for at least a week. The Commonwealth remains on Step 1 of Phase 3, with Step 2 postponed indefinitely. BCBOHA will continue to provide updates and coordinate public messaging on the situation on a regular basis, approximately every other week (down from once a week). Please share this information with your other municipal officials, boards and departments.**

### **Latest News:**

#### **Support for Local Board of Health Staff**

The Department of Public Health has contracted with CMG Associates, a psychological consulting firm in Newton, to support local health department staff and members of boards of health in addressing challenges associated with the response to the COVID-19 pandemic. As documented in experiences reported in Massachusetts and in national media stories, staff and BOH members are often confronted by residents and/or business owners with angry rhetoric and threats associated with enforcement of COVID-19 reopening orders and standards. CMG Associates will provide one-to-one support as requested and professional development opportunities on stress and change management. This free and confidential support will be particularly valuable in cities and towns in which employee assistance programs and similar supports are not available. Please contact Bruce Cedar, EdD at [bcedar@cmgassociates.com](mailto:bcedar@cmgassociates.com) for more information and to access services.

#### **Order on Gatherings**

On August 7, Governor Baker issued a new order on gathering sizes in response to reports of large gatherings and a small increase in cases. Under this order, which can be found [here](#), gatherings, other than those for political and religious expression, are subject to the following limitations:

- No more than 8 persons per 1,000 feet of accessible, useable, indoor space, and never more than 25 people in a single, enclosed indoor space,
- Outdoor gatherings limited to 25% of the permitted allowable occupancy, or 8 persons per 1,000 square feet if no occupancy limit, and never more than 50 individuals in a single outdoor space,
- All participants must be able to maintain 6 feet of physical distance between individuals not of the same household under all conditions.

Outdoor gatherings for religious or political expression shall not be subject to these limitations. Indoor political activities are subject to these limitations, and indoor religious activities must comply with COVID-19 safety rules and occupancy limitations set forth in the Places of Worship sector-specific guidance found [here](#).

Public safety officials, including state and local law enforcement, have the jurisdiction to enforce these orders and event hosts in violation of these orders will be subject to fines or cease and desist orders.

## **Re-opening Schools**

All schools in the Commonwealth have provided initial re-opening plans to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) in accordance with guidance. Commissioner Riley has reduced the number of school days from 180 to 170, and most schools in Berkshire County are opening remotely in mid-September, some of them with plans to go to a hybrid model in early October, contingent upon successful negotiations with the teachers' union. A few smaller schools such as those in Hancock, Savoy and Florida, will be open full-time to all students. Most districts have posted their plan on their websites.

### *Key Health and Safety Requirements Reconciliation*

On September 3, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and DPH updated their joint memo reconciling inconsistencies in guidance formerly issued by each agency. The memo can be found: [DESE and DPH Joint Memo Clarifying Key Health and Safety Requirements for Schools](#). These slides: [DPH-DESE Alignment Slides](#) may also be useful. On August 20, the state issued revised [Protocols for responding to COVID-19 scenarios in school, on the bus, or in community settings](#).

### *Plumbing concerns*

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 schools should ensure that their building does not have mold in the water system. Before school buildings are reopened, the plumbing should be flushed to avoid legionella or other potential waterborne issues, including heavy metals like lead or copper in the pipes. Click here for [Guidance on flushing plumbing](#) in schools, early education and care facilities (EECFs), and other buildings after long term closures

### *Indoor Air Quality*

Information on indoor air quality in schools can be found by clicking on this link: [EPA Supports Healthy Indoor Environments in Schools During COVID-19 Pandemic](#).

### *Feeding Programs*

The U.S. Department of Agriculture announced on Monday, August 31, that it will allow summer meal program operators to continue serving universal free meals to children through December 31. However, that as of August 31, DESE has not received a response to its July 24 waiver request to continue universal free meals through the entirety of the 2020-2021 school year.

### *School Sports*

DESE and the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA) issued a joint guidance on a modified sports schedule for the 2020-2021 school year. [Joint Guidance on Modified Sports Seasons for School Year 2020-21](#).

### *Public Awareness Campaign*

- [Public Awareness Campaign as Students Head Back to School](#)
- [Parent FAQs for Returning to School](#)

Additional extensive information about K-12 school re-opening can be found on the website of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), and information about opening of pre-school and daycares can be found on the website of the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC). Note that information may be found in multiple places on these websites.

## **Childcare Support for Families / Hybrid and Remote Learning Models**

On August 28, the Baker Administration announced policies to allow for off-site facilities to expand childcare options for parents whose children's schools are operating in a remote or hybrid fashion. The Governor's Order allows the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) to authorize currently licensed after-school and out-of-school programs to operate during the school day while children are learning remotely. Currently these programs may not operate while school is in session. In addition, the Order creates a temporary license exemption for remote learning enrichment programs to provide supervision and care for school children up to age 14 while they participate in remote learning during the school day. These remote learning programs, which must meet specific criteria, including background record checks, health and safety standards, facilities checks, and child to staff ratios, must be approved by the local municipality before they can apply for the license exemption. The Order is not specific as to which municipal department or departments are responsible for ensuring these programs meet the criteria. Programs run by a school district are already exempt from EEC licensure and do not need to apply for this exemption. Finally, the Order also exempts informal remote learning parent cooperative arrangements organized by families, if the groups are supervised by unpaid parents. These parent cooperatives are still subject to any state orders regulating gatherings in place under the COVID-19 state of emergency. More information on these options can be found in the following links:

- [Press Release](#)
- [Order](#)
- [Joint Guidance on Hybrid and Remote Learning Models from EEC & DESE](#)
- [Supplemental Remote Learning Information and Resources](#)

## **Flu Vaccine Mandate and Public Clinics**

On August 19, the Department of Public Health announced that all children 6 months and older attending childcare, preschool, all grades of school from kindergarten to 12<sup>th</sup> grade, as well as students of post-secondary institutions, will be required to have a flu vaccination by December 31, 2020 unless they have a religious or medical exemption. K-12 students who are homeschooled and higher education students who are completely off-campus and engaged in remote learning only are also exempted. Elementary and secondary students in districts and schools that are using a remote education model are **not** exempt. See the [Press Release](#) for more information.

BCBOHA, along with the Berkshire Public Health Alliance, the Pittsfield Health Department, The Community Health Association of Richmond and West Stockbridge, the Berkshire Visiting Nurse Association and Berkshire Health Systems/Fairview Hospital are all working together to coordinate a plan to provide flu vaccinations to school-aged children, as well as their families, throughout the county. Flu clinics will be held in outdoor, protected locations or in large, well-ventilated indoor spaces. The public will be expected to follow all relevant health and safety standards, and to register in advance, when possible. The state has purchased an electronic, online, paperless system called PrepMod that Local Health Departments can use at their immunization clinics to schedule, screen, bill and report to the Massachusetts Immunization Information System (MIIS). Currently the public health nursing organizations are awaiting vaccine deliveries both for privately purchased vaccine (for adults) as well as for state supplied vaccine for children. Once vaccine is received clinics will be scheduled, and that schedule will be made public. Please work with your public health nurse, as well as with any schools in your municipality, to help schedule these clinics and make them a success.

Also of note, this year's table of school vaccination requirements also includes a new meningococcal vaccine requirement that must be administered on or after the student's 16<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Frequently asked questions about the new flu vaccine requirement, as well as the meningococcal and other vaccine requirements, can be found [here](#).

### **COVID Enforcement and Complaints**

A state interagency COVID-19 Enforcement and Intervention Team, consisting of the Executive Office and Public Safety and Security (EOPSS) and the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA), who will serve as coordinators of the team, the Command Center, the Massachusetts State Police (MSP), the Department of Labor Standards (DLS), the Division of Professional Licensure (DPL), the Department of Public Health (DPH), the Division of Local Services (DLS), the Alcoholic Beverages Control Commission (ABCC) and the Executive Office of Technology Services and Security (EOTSS), has been formed to provide coordinated, targeted interventions in high-risk areas, scale up statewide enforcement on the various measures in place to combat the COVID-19 outbreak and help coordinate local intervention efforts in higher risk communities. Communities will be designated as higher risk COVID-19 communities based on public health data, including but not limited to rising trends for new cases and the percentage of positive COVID tests.

Complaints, questions or issues of concern can be submitted in a number of ways.

#### *General Complaints*

Residents wishing to report non-compliance with the Commonwealth's travel advisory quarantine, face covering, gathering, or other public health rules should fill out [this form](#).

#### *Schools*

For concerns or questions related to school re-opening, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education can be reached at the following links:

- District/school-based personnel may email [reopeningk12@mass.gov](mailto:reopeningk12@mass.gov).
- Parents/caregivers may email questions to [COVID19K12ParentInfo@mass.gov](mailto:COVID19K12ParentInfo@mass.gov).

#### *Workplaces*

Concerns about workplaces, including Covid-19 safety procedures at workplace, Covid-19 positive employee at a workplace, business eligibility to re-open and questions about DLS Covid-19 enforcement should be directed to the Department of Labor Standards:

- Email: [safepublicworkplacemailbox@mass.gov](mailto:safepublicworkplacemailbox@mass.gov)
- [DLS On-line Complaint Form](#)
- Phone Hotline: (508) 616-0461 x 9488

#### *Youth & Adult Sports*

Questions and input related to the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs' COVID-19 Youth and Adult Amateur Sports Guidance can be made [here](#).

#### *Child Care*

Best practices, questions, concerns, or feedback for the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) on reopening childcare can be submitted [here](#).

## **New Workplace Standards Regulation**

The Department of Labor Standards has proposed a uniform set of COVID-19 Workplace Safety Rules (454 CMR 31) that will incorporate all of the COVID-19 Sector-Specific Standards while keeping the enforcement structure jointly shared by LBOH and DLS. A public hearing is being held by Webex on September 9 at 10am. Written testimony can be submitted until September 11.

Draft regulation: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/454-cmr-31-covid-19-workplace-safety-regulations/download>

Notice of Hearing on 9/9/2020 <https://www.mass.gov/news/notice-of-public-hearing-regarding-proposed-covid-19-workplace-safety-regulations>

## **New Restaurant Guidance on Alcohol**

The restaurant protocols will now require that alcohol can only be ordered at a restaurant if it is accompanied by food. Please see the [Safety Standards and Checklist – Restaurants](#) (updated August 7<sup>th</sup>; effective August 11<sup>th</sup>)

## **Remote Proctoring of Food Protection Manager Certification**

[Food Protection Manager - Remote Proctoring](#) provides a chart of the ANSI National Accreditation Board (ANAB)-accredited organizations that are approved to use remote proctoring for administration of their food protection manager exams.

## **COVID-19 Testing**

### *Berkshire Health Systems*

In Berkshire County, testing continues to be available through Berkshire Health Systems (BHS). Drive-through testing is conducted at Berkshire Medical Center (BMC) in Pittsfield, although an appointment and provider order is required. Provider orders may be obtained by calling the BHS hotline. Testing is also available, by appointment and with physician order near Fairview Hospital in Great Barrington and at the BMC campus in North Adams. BHS has limited capability to conduct rapid testing, but this is based on the supply chain for those test kits and is mostly limited to inpatients and emergency department patients. The BHS hotline can be reached 8 AM TO 4:30 PM seven days a week at 855-BMC-LINK, OR 855-262-5465. To date BHS has conducted 22,791 tests with 616 of those being positive (2.7%).

### *Other Berkshire providers*

Some Berkshire medical providers are also providing COVID testing for their patients, notably Community Health Programs (CHP). Those seeking testing through their own medical providers should confirm the turnaround time for the test and follow-up on results.

### *Stop the Spread Sites*

Stop the Spread Testing Sites are a state initiative offering free testing in 17 targeted communities across the Commonwealth. The initiative is a data-driven focused effort to reduce the prevalence of COVID-19 in communities that are above the state average in total cases, positive test rate, and have experienced a decline in testing levels since April. These sites are open to all residents of the Commonwealth. This initiative has been extended through September 30, to help with back to school. Currently there are sites in 17 communities, including two in Western Mass (none in Berkshire County): Agawam, Brockton, Chelsea, Everett, Fall River, Framingham, Lawrence, Lowell, Lynn, Marlborough, Methuen, New

Bedford, Randolph, Revere, Springfield, Taunton, and Worcester. Information on location, hours and whether an appointment is needed can be found [here](#).

#### *State Testing to Support K-12 Schools*

On August 20, the administration announced rapid response testing initiatives for schools to address potential clusters of COVID-19 cases among students, teachers or staff at a school building. School officials, after consultation with public health authorities, will be able to request a state-sponsored mobile testing unit come to their school to test a group of students and/or staff if a potential cluster of COVID-19 has been identified and transmission appears to have occurred within the school. This resource is available to both public and private schools. The mobile rapid response unit will provide free testing of asymptomatic students or staff, who are not known to be a close contact of someone who tested positive, when there is evidence that COVID-19 transmission may have occurred within a classroom or school within the past 14 days. After consulting with an epidemiologist from the Department of Public Health, a school administrator or the local board of health can request a mobile rapid response unit be deployed by the COVID-19 Command Response Center.

For information on testing, **visit the Massachusetts Department of Public Health website**. To find a testing site near you, visit **MDPH's interactive COVID-19 Test Site Locator map**.

#### **Community-level Reporting**

The state has begun releasing additional data on community level spread of COVID-19 in order to target additional resources and implement community specific strategies to stop the spread of the virus. This includes data on the average daily cases per 100,000 residents, average percent positivity, and positive tests, for all 351 Massachusetts cities and towns over the previous two weeks.

Based on the average daily cases per 100,000 residents, each city or town is designated as a higher risk, moderate risk, or lower risk community. This information is updated and included in the Department of Public Health's weekly public health dashboard, which is published each Wednesday.

[Click here to view a map with these designations by community.](#)

Any city or town designated higher risk is considered to have a high level of COVID infection and will receive additional support from the Commonwealth to address the spread of the virus.

#### **Weekly City/Town Data Reports on Data Dashboard**

The state also temporarily stopped reporting data at a county level, but this has been resumed. Discussion continues about the best way to report data for regional school districts; currently one municipality in each school district will be monitored, however, the limitations of this method suggest that an alternative will be needed.

The most recent Berkshire County reporting can be found later in this document.

#### **Traveler Ban**

Effective August 1, all travelers entering Massachusetts from designated high-risk states must either quarantine for 14-days after arrival or have a negative COVID test within 72 hours. This order applies to



MA residents who travel outside Massachusetts, as well as travelers who normally reside elsewhere who enter the state. [Full Travel Order](#).

Travelers from lower-risk states are exempted from this requirement. Designated lower-risk states currently include Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Vermont and West Virginia. Travelers from higher-risk states are exempt from the quarantine requirement if they have received a negative result from a COVID-19 test based on a sample obtained not longer than 72 hours before their arrival in Massachusetts. A traveler relying on the 72-hour test rule must be prepared to provide proof of the negative test result on request. There are additional limited exemptions for individuals traveling for work or medical reasons.

All affected travelers are expected to fill out [the Massachusetts Traveler Form](#) unless they meet one of the exemptions. The information from the forms is entered into a database maintained by the Community Tracing Collaborative (CTC). All local Boards of Health may gain access to the database for the purposes of responding to complaints in their jurisdiction. The CTC Traveler Database Liaison for Berkshire County is Radhika Bhavsar and she can be reached at [rbhavsar@covid19.pih.org](mailto:rbhavsar@covid19.pih.org).

### **Cumberland Farms**

Under a corrective action plan from the Department of Labor Services (DLS) Cumberland Farms was to cease all self-service beverage stations by August 21. They will continue to sell coffee and beverages, but they will be provided via a staffed ordering and pick-up counter.

### **LBOH Webinar on Worker Safety offered by Massachusetts Coalition for Occupational Health and Safety and the Coalition for Local Public Health (CLPH)**

COVID-19 has created a worker health and safety crisis. Since the beginning of the pandemic, workers on the frontlines – healthcare workers, first-responders, grocery store workers, public transit workers – have been getting sick and dying from workplace exposure to SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. See registration page for more information and CEUs. Tuesday, September 8<sup>th</sup> | 9:30-11:00am | Register Here: <https://macovid.eventbrite.com>

### **CARES Act funding**

The federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (the “CARES Act”) includes funds for Massachusetts governments to use to pay costs incurred in responding to the COVID-19 outbreak. All Massachusetts municipalities are eligible for municipal CARES Act Funding.

- [CARES Act FAQ](#)

### **Pick your own Fruit**

Guidance is available on pick your own fruit: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/mdar-bulletin-16-farm-pick-your-own-pyoagricultural-tourism-activities/download>

### **Carnivals and Fairs**

Carnival rides, such as a carousel and arcades may not open until Phase 4. All gatherings must comply with gathering limits.

### **Other News, Updates & Guidance**

### **Updated Restaurant Guidance / Live Entertainment**

Restaurant guidance was updated in July to allow for entertainment and live performances. Brass and wind instruments and singing is prohibited indoors and discouraged outdoors. In addition to following all restaurant guidance, restaurants offering live entertainment must also follow the theater & performance venue guidance, found [here](#).

### **Disposal of Beer and Food Waste**

The closure of restaurants, bars, and other venues due to the COVID-19 outbreak has resulted in an abundance of beer and other food waste going stale in these establishments. Beer, in particular, has a very high Biochemical Oxygen Demand (BOD), making it what is referred to as “high strength wastewater,” which also has a very low pH. The combination of the beer’s high BOD and low pH make disposing of stale beer in the sewer system extremely problematic, with the potential to cause damaging conditions within the sewer system and to potentially overwhelm the receiving wastewater treatment plant. Given the current volumes of stale beer and other food waste across the Commonwealth, it is imperative that it is disposed of properly. MassDEP and MWRA recommend:

1. Stale beer and other food waste should not be disposed of down the drain.
2. Restaurants, bars, and other venues should work with distributor to collect full and partially full kegs.
3. Distributors and other venues can also explore other options through MassDEP or RecyclingWorks for disposal at anaerobic digestion facilities. You can find a list of facilities accepting diverted food waste [here](#). For assistance, contact RecyclingWorks at 888-254-5525 or email [info@recyclingworksma.com](mailto:info@recyclingworksma.com).

### **BCBOHA Job Aids**

BCBOHA continues to update checklists and job aids to assist Boards of Health and their businesses to reopen. The most recent version of the job aids can be found [HERE](#). Many of the job aids have been updated to encompass the most recent guidance related to COVID-19.

### **Smoking and Outside Dining During COVID**

According to MHOA, if your community has not banned smoking at a restaurant’s outdoor seating, then smoking can be permitted if the location meets state regulation requirements found in 105 CMR 661.200. This is relevant during COVID because many smoke-free restaurants that typically do not have outdoor seating are now being given temporary permission to have outdoor seating. BOHs can include being smoke-free as one of the requirements to obtain permission for outdoor seating for a restaurant. Reasons to add this condition include 1) second hand smoke exposure is dangerous especially with COVID primarily being a respiratory disease, and 2) it maintains a “level playing field” for all restaurants aiming to stay afloat financially during the pandemic.

### **Updated Town Meeting Guidance:**

Updated Town Meeting guidance was distributed on June 11<sup>th</sup> to address COVID-19 safety recommendations. The purpose of these guidelines are to provide instructions to municipalities to safely conduct Town Meetings and help protect against the spread of COVID-19 as in-person meetings resume. Several Berkshire towns have successfully held socially distanced Annual Town Meetings, Special Town Meetings and Annual Elections.

### **RMV Guidance**



Governor Baker signed COVID-19 Order No. 39 which authorizes the RMV to implement temporary processes through August. This included processes for on-line testing for learner's permits, as well as an extended deadline to register a new vehicle. For RMV FAQs please click [HERE](#).

### **COVID-19 Data Collection Bill**

Governor Baker filed "An Act to Ensure the Collection of COVID-19 Data" to build on legislation recently signed by the governor to expand data collection during the COVID-19 pandemic by the DPH. In part, this bill is intended to ensure timely and accurate data collection related to COVID-19 to help further address the health disparities affecting, in particular, communities of color and older residents. In addition, this bill aims to enhance the data the Baker Administration publishes daily to inform the public about the impact of COVID-19 within the Commonwealth. For more information on the bill, click [HERE](#).

### **Updates on Breweries and Wineries**

Breweries and Wineries are still able to operate take out services. While bars, breweries, and wineries will not be permitted to open until Phase 4, breweries and wineries may open in Phase 2 if they provide seated food and beverage service, where patrons do not mingle in the venue. The Alcoholic Beverage Control Commission (ABCC) released an advisory regarding the local licensing authority's ability to expand alcohol licensees' licensed premises for outdoor seating on an expedited basis. This Advisory can be found [HERE](#). In addition, ABCC also released guidelines for extension of premises to patio and outdoor areas, found [HERE](#). A properly permitted food truck can be used as the source of the food, as long as it is served at the table.

### **Tag/Yard Sales**

The Department of Labor Standards (DLS) provided clarification on Yard Sales on June 8<sup>th</sup>, below:

- A yard sale, by definition, is private activity of personal household goods on private property (DLS will not take any action)
- A town can continue to regulate Yard Sales according to local ordinance.
- The limits on in person gatherings in public would apply.

### **Reopening Plan Template**

On May 18<sup>th</sup>, 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](#).

### **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.

## **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](#).

## **Situation Report:**

In January, 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 September 3, there have been 119,819 cases of COVID-19 in Massachusetts, of which 669 are in Berkshire County. The number of COVID tests in Massachusetts has increased to over 2.5 million to 1.8 million individuals. There have been 9,077 deaths in Massachusetts, with 46 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 information is known (98%) have had underlying health conditions that put them at increased risk. 64% of deaths have been in individuals residing in nursing homes. Overall, all important indicators are down dramatically in Massachusetts and the rate of increase is almost flat across the Commonwealth.

There have been 6,087,403 reported cases in the United States as of September 3, and 185,092 deaths. IN the past week, there have been 288,357 new cases in the US. The highest number of cases have been seen in California, Florida, Texas, New York, Georgia, Illinois and Arizona.

For the daily Massachusetts COVID reporting, as well as the weekly municipal level reporting (updated on Wednesdays, please click [here](#).

## **Weekly Conference Calls for Local Boards of Health**

- DPH continues to hold weekly calls with local boards of health across the Commonwealth on Tuesdays at 3:00 PM. These calls have DPH staff from a variety of departments available for answering questions including Epidemiology, Emergency Preparedness and Environmental Health. The number for this call is 888-390-5007 and the participant code is 6137873.
- The Governor's Command Center also holds a weekly call for the LBOH every Friday at 9:00 AM. Boards of Health are asked to only have one person dial in as phone lines are limited. Dial in information is: 888-390-5007 with Passcode 4847016.
- In addition, DPH has been holding a weekly call related to MAVEN on Tuesdays at 11:30.
- Dr. Dan Doyle from Berkshire Medical Center and the Dalton BOH is also holding weekly conference calls with the LBOH of Berkshire County, especially the medical personnel who are

also on Boards of Health and chairs and other representatives. **These calls have been moved from Friday afternoons to Wednesday afternoons at 3:00.**

- BCBOHA has been hosting a call for BOH staff and agents on Friday mornings at 11:30 AM. If you would like to join this call please contact us for call-in information.

### **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.

### **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](#).  
<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/maintaining-emotional-health-well-being-during-the-covid-19-outbreak>
- New Social Distancing infographics: Click here for [YOUTH](#) & [GENERAL](#).
- COVID-2019 infographic for posting in all public places: [DOWNLOAD](#).

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:

<https://www.mass.gov/guides/information-on-the-outbreak-of-2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19#-printable-fact-sheets->

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:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/guidance-business->

[response.html?CDC\\_AA\\_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fguidance-business-response.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/guidance-business-response.html)