

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

BERKSHIRE COUNTY BOARDS OF HEALTH ASSOCIATION

Pittsfield, MA July 1, 2020

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

Please note: This is a rapidly evolving situation. There were very few cases in Berkshire County during the month of June, mostly related to travel outside the county. Cases continue to rise slowly elsewhere in the Commonwealth, but hospitalizations, percentage testing positive and number of people seeking testing have fallen. On June 30 Massachusetts had its first day with no reported COVID deaths since mid-March. The Commonwealth is currently in Part 2 of 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:

Update Quarantine Guidance

On June 30, Governor Baker announced updated guidance this afternoon for those traveling to Massachusetts. All travelers arriving to Massachusetts – including Massachusetts residents returning home – are instructed to self-quarantine for 14 days, except that, beginning July 1, 2020, travelers from Rhode Island, Connecticut, Vermont, New Hampshire, Maine, New York, and New Jersey arriving in Massachusetts are exempt from this directive and need not self-quarantine for 14 days. Workers designated by the federal government as essential critical infrastructure workers are exempt from the directive to self-quarantine for 14 days if traveling to Massachusetts for work purposes. All persons are instructed not to travel to Massachusetts if they are displaying symptoms of COVID-19. For Massachusetts travel information, please visit the Department of Public Health's (DPH) website [here: Travel Information Related to COVID-19](#). For national travel information, please visit www.travel.state.gov.

Initial School Re-opening Guidance

On June 25, 2020 the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) released initial guidance for school reopening in the fall. The guidance aims to get as many children back to in-person learning as can be safely done. The guidance can be found be downloaded from the DESE webpage.

Updated CDC Guidance for Cooling Centers

The CDC recently released guidance for operating cooling centers during the COVID-19 pandemic. These guidelines include considerations such as increased absences of staff and volunteers of sites, screening and alternative sites for symptomatic and asymptomatic individuals, air filtration, physical distancing, cleaning, and more. Find the CDC guidance on operating cooling centers [HERE](#).

Phase II, Step 2 of Massachusetts Reopening

On June 19th, the Baker Administration announced a plan for the continuation of the Massachusetts reopening into Phase II, Step 2. Included in this step of reopening, indoor table service at restaurants is able to resume at a limited capacity, close personal services, including tattoo shops, waxing service, and massage may resume with limitations, retail dressing rooms may operate by appointment, and office capacity increases from 25% in Step 1 to 50% in Step 2.

For the Press Release, click [HERE](#)

For information on close personal services included in Step 2, click [HERE](#)

For information on safety standards and restaurants in Step 2, click [HERE](#)

For other sector-specific protocols and best practices in Phase II, Step 2, click [HERE](#)

Advisory Group Report on Health Equity and COVID-19

To address the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on communities of color and marginalized populations, the DPH's COVID-19 Health Equity Advisory Group released new data and specific recommendations to inform the state's ongoing response. The Health Equity Advisory Group, lead by Commissioner Monica Bharel, includes 26 community leaders, health and racial equity experts, and members of communities and populations disproportionately impacted by the coronavirus pandemic. Jennifer Kimball, a Principal Planner at the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, served as a member of the Advisory Group.

The top recommendations from the report include:

- Continuing to disaggregate COVID data across populations and sectors, such as transit usage.
- Increasing equitable distribution of personal protective equipment (PPE) for essential workers and Commonwealth residents in professions most at risk.
- Implement policies that increase housing stability for populations disproportionately impacted by COVID-19.
- Prioritizing investment in multilingual outreach to communities to increase access to testing, home and workplace protections, and access to state assistance programs.
- Planning and implementing a strategy for the active engagement and representation of existing community based organizations in the most-impacted communities as part of decision-making processes related to COVID-19 response and recovery.

For the list of full recommendations by the Advisory Group, click [HERE](#).

Mass Gathering State-wide Testing Results

On June 17th and 18th, the state hosted free testing for individuals who have attended mass gatherings, as well as the general public. Over 30,000 individuals from across the state participated in the testing, with a positive test rate on approximately 2-3%, which is level with the current testing rate in the state. In Berkshire County, Berkshire Medical Center reported that over 500 individuals were tested, and that as of June 23rd, there were no positives. These results in Berkshire County and across the state indicate lower than expected transmission from recent demonstrations and other mass gatherings. BCBOHA will follow up with written, reported results as they become available.

Massachusetts Get Tested Website

For consolidated information regarding testing sites, who can get tested in MA, a COVID symptom checker, and other resources, visit the Get Tested MA! Website [HERE](#).

Other Recent Updates and Guidance:

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.

Reopening Phase II

On June 6, Governor Baker announced that Phase 2 would commence on Monday, June 8, 2020. Governor Baker 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](#).

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 11th 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 last week 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 Testing at Independent Senior Housing, Frequently Asked Questions

The DPH released an FAQ for testing at independent senior housing facilities. For more information, click [HERE](#).

Youth Sports Leagues and Sports Camps Guidance

The Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs provided an update on June 3rd for youth sports leagues and sports camps. This update increases camp group sizes to a maximum of 12 individuals, and allows for non-contact swimming lessons. For more information, 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 affection, 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 Camp, Child Care, School Regulations for Safety

On June 9, 2020 the DPH said that they are no longer limiting day camp attendance to Massachusetts residents. Children attending day camps in Massachusetts should follow the 14-day quarantine recommendation prior to attending a summer camp program in MA. In addition, the DPH is no longer recommending temperature checks for children at camps, day care programs, and school programs as it has not been established as a reliable measure of potential illness.

Pediatric Vaccines and Physicals

The DPH is reporting a drop of 35% to 40% in routine pediatric vaccines, indicating that families are seeking routine care less during the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, DPH has heard concerns about routine camp and school requirements for physicals. DPH indicated that BOHs should work with schools, camps, and other child care facilities, as well as families, to encourage routine vaccines for children, and for BOHs to continue to require physicals for children attending camps, child care, and school programming.

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](#).

Visitation for Residents of Group Homes and Residential Schools

The department of Developmental Services (DDS) issued a visitation policy on June 6th, effective June 10th, with guidelines for visitations at group homes for the developmentally disabled and residential schools. The guidelines layout requirements related to the use of outdoor areas for visitation, visitor screening, face masks, social distancing and supervision, scheduling visits, and disinfecting the visitation areas, among other items. BCBOHA has provided this guidance as an attachment to this week's BOH memo.

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.

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 8th, 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 10-person gathering rule in public would apply.

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. 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 is a reflection of guidance from the CDC to include "probable" COVID-19 cases and deaths in data collection and reporting efforts. This change will 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](#).

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

The Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs released a memo detailing guidelines on the opening of parks, open space, and outdoor education programs. 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-your-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](#).

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.

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.

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. Current requests were due on June 12, and there will be an opportunity to request FY 21 funds at a later date. More information can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

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 privacy of patients, case data are only available for municipalities with ≥ 5 cases. Please note that these are the case reports according to DPH records; occasionally this may differ from municipal reports due to confusion on addresses (particularly where towns share a common 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](#). See the table below for Berkshire County community-level data (updated July 1, 2020).

Adams	35	New Ashford	0
Alford	<5	New Marlborough	7
Becket	14	North Adams*	46
Cheshire	<5	Otis	<5
Clarksburg	7	Peru	<5
Dalton*	16	Pittsfield*	175
Egremont	5	Richmond	5
Florida	<5	Sandisfield*	<5
Great Barrington*	73	Savoy	<5
Hancock	<5	Sheffield	15
Hinsdale	<5	Stockbridge	14
Lanesboro	8	Tyringham	<5
Lee*	19	Washington	<5
Lenox*	13	West Stockbridge	5

Monterey	0	Williamstown*	82
Mount Washington	0	Windsor	0
<p>* 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.</p>			

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.

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.
- 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.

Berkshire County Emergency Operations:

Berkshire County Emergency Operations Centers are starting to ramp down, while planning to be able to ramp back up quickly should it be necessary.

- **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

UPDATE: The Central Berkshire Coordinating Center has reduced its regular situational update calls and has consolidated its operations at the 2nd Street Coordinating Center as of June 18th. Supplies and equipment will be stored for future use. Operations will resume if and when necessary.

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

The SBREPC can be reached at sbrepc@gmail.com.

UPDATE: SBREPC is discontinuing their regular written updates as of June 19th. Updates will resume in the future as needed.

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](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/maintaining-emotional-health-well-being-during-the-covid-19-outbreak).
<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](#).

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 July 1, there have been 109,143 cases of COVID-19 in Massachusetts, of which 597 are in Berkshire County. The number of people tested in Massachusetts has increased to over 1 million people, and almost 73,000 have received antibody testing. There have been 8,081 deaths in Massachusetts, with 44 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 2,624,873 reported cases in the United States as of July 1, and 127,299 deaths. Cases are currently surging in southeastern states, Texas and California, among others. Most of the northeast is seeing continuing decreasing cases, hospitalizations and 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:

<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