

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

## BERKSHIRE COUNTY BOARDS OF HEALTH ASSOCIATION

Pittsfield, MA May 27, 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 elsewhere in the Commonwealth, but hospitalizations, percentage testing positive and number of people seeking testing have fallen. The Commonwealth is currently in Phase 1 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 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 at: <http://berkshireplanning.org/initiatives/sub/boh-job-aids>

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

The Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs released a memorandum detailing guidelines on the opening of parks, open space, and outdoor education programs during Phase 1 of the reopening of Massachusetts. 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.

##### **Guidance for Industries on the Reopening Plan**

The Baker Administration released detailed commentary to provide additional information on businesses and activities summarized in the Reopening Massachusetts report. Businesses expected to be allowed to open in future phases will be subject to certain limitations and guidelines that will be provided in the future. Additionally, all of the information provided in the guidance is subject to revision based on the latest public health data. The guidance and commentary for industries can be found [HERE](#).

##### **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 Golf Courses**

The DPH provided additional guidance for golf courses, including:

- Golf course restaurants should now be treated like any other with takeout and delivery available. Takeout has to be consumed off the premises of the restaurant, including any restaurant outdoor spaces. Takeout may be picked up and taken in a golf cart out on the course.
- Walking is encouraged, but golf carts may be used only if each cart is used by and contains only a single rider, or a group of family members living in the same house. Any carts used must be cleaned and sanitized after each use.

### **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**

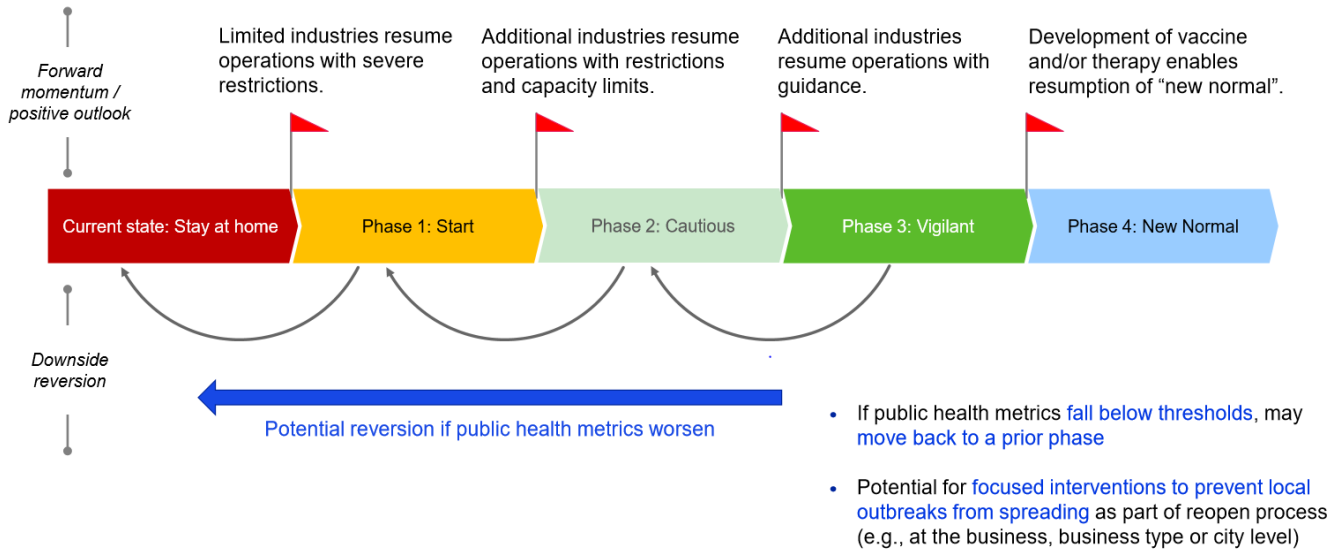
On May 18<sup>th</sup>, Governor Baker and the Reopening Advisory Board, chaired by Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito and Secretary of Housing and Economic Development Mike Kennealy, released a four-phase plan to reopen Massachusetts. Reopening will be driven by public health metrics and data trends that will inform the state's ability to move into the next phases and return to previous phases when appropriate. As of May 18<sup>th</sup>, Massachusetts is in phase 1: Start, which includes the reopening of limited industries with severe workplace restrictions. Throughout all phases of reopening, 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.

#### Dashboard of public health indicators

- Starting on May 18, the COVID-19 Command Center will give updates on six key public health indicators
- Before and during reopening, these metrics must continue to show progress

Below is the status as of **May 18, 2020**:

Indicator	Status
1 COVID-19 positive test rate	Positive trend
2 Number of individuals who died from COVID-19	In progress
3 Number of patients with COVID-19 in hospitals	In progress
4 Healthcare system readiness	In progress
5 Testing capacity	Positive trend
6 Contact tracing capabilities	In progress

Legend

- Positive trend
- In progress
- Negative trend

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

The Baker Administration released a Safer at Home Advisory on May 18<sup>th</sup> 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](#).

### Cover – Wash – Distance – Vigilance

- ✓ People over the age of 65 and people who have underlying health conditions – who are at high risk for COVID-19 – should continue to stay home except for essential errands such as going to the grocery store and to attend to healthcare needs
- ✓ All residents are advised to leave home only for healthcare, worship and permitted work, shopping, and outdoor activities
- ✓ All residents are **REQUIRED** to cover their face when they cannot maintain six feet of social distance in public
- ✓ All residents are advised to wash their hands frequently for at least 20 seconds with soapy water
- ✓ All residents are advised to be vigilant, monitor for symptoms and stay home if you feel sick

### What Safer At Home Means

- Only leave home for health care, permitted work, shopping, and outdoor activities
- When going to the pharmacy ask if you can fill your prescriptions for 90 days if possible; for some medications this is not allowed. If you are at high-risk, try to use a mail-order service
- Don't participate in close contact activities such as pick-up sports games
- Use remote modes of communication like phone or video chat instead of visiting friends or family who are high risk for COVID-19
- Refrain from visiting nursing homes, skilled nursing facilities, or other residential care settings
- Parents should limit play dates for children

### 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.

### Detailed Industry Reopening Plan:

The Industry Reopening Plan provides additional information on businesses and activities summarized in the Reopening Massachusetts report. This plan provides a non-exhaustive list of all possible businesses that can open in each phase and may be updated from time to time.

- For more information, click [HERE](#).

### 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](#).

### 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](mailto: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](#).

In Berkshire County, Dr. Alan Kulberg is able to sign an order for testing for residents of Pittsfield identified as close contacts by the Board of Health, and Dr. Dan Doyle will sign orders for testing for residents of all other municipalities in the county identified by the Board of Health.

According to the Governor's announcement on May 14, the state expects to be able to test 45,000 people per day by the end of July and 75,000 a day by the end of December, with the goal of decreasing the positivity rate to below 5%.

### **New Guidelines for Use of the Pittsfield Isolation and Recovery Site at the Hilton Garden Inn**

Any resident who meets the listed conditions may be referred to the Hilton Garden Inn for isolation and recovery:

1. COVID-19 positive test **OR** under investigation with symptoms, pending test results, and healthcare provider's note recommending isolation for presumed positive COVID-19 status;
2. Covered by MassHealth (including HSN & Limited) **OR** with an income under 400% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL);

3. In need of a safe place to isolate, due to conditions such as, but not limited to: overcrowded household, living with a high-risk individual (older adult, immunocompromised, pre-existing respiratory condition), etc.;
4. Are from Berkshire or Franklin counties, or the surrounding area.

Referral must be done by calling **617-367-5150** between the hours of 7 a.m. and 7 p.m.

The site is **NOT** available for individuals who:

- require assistance with Activities of Daily Living from on-site staff; or
- require medication administration (except for methadone or buprenorphine); or
- require the level of care provided at a Skilled Nursing Facility.

The isolation site provides 3 meals/day, 24/7 nursing and security, and other supports to ensure continuation of regular care for individuals, including behavioral health supports, pharmacy assistance, telehealth.

- More information about isolation sites in MA can be found [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. 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. More information can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

### **Pediatric Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome (PMIS)**

As of May 14, nine cases of a multisystem inflammatory syndrome, similar to Kawasaki Disease and toxic-shock syndrome, have been seen in Massachusetts children previously infected with COVID-19. Some of these children were asymptomatic for COVID, and most had fully recovered prior to the development of PMIS. Association with prior COVID infection was made through antibody testing. Because PMIS is recently identified or suspected to be a public health concern, and in order to reduce morbidity and mortality in the Commonwealth due to PMIS, the Commissioner has declared confirmed and suspect cases of PMIS to be immediately reportable to the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (Department) pursuant to 105 CMR 300.150. Although PMIS is rare, parents should be aware of the signs of PMIS and seek medical treatment as soon as possible.

### **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 privacy of patients, case data are only available for municipalities with  $\geq 5$  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. In addition, DPH is now providing patient census by hospital daily. Access reports [HERE](#). See the table below for Berkshire County community-level data (updated May 20, 2020).

<b>Adams</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>New Ashford</b>	0
<b>Alford</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>New Marlborough</b>	6
<b>Becket</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>North Adams*</b>	46
<b>Cheshire</b>	<b>&lt;5</b>	<b>Otis</b>	<5
<b>Clarksburg</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>Peru</b>	<5
<b>Dalton*</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>Pittsfield*</b>	169
<b>Egremont</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>Richmond</b>	5
<b>Florida</b>	<b>&lt;5</b>	<b>Sandisfield*</b>	<5
<b>Great Barrington*</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>Savoy</b>	<5
<b>Hancock</b>	<b>&lt;5</b>	<b>Sheffield</b>	15
<b>Hinsdale</b>	<b>&lt;5</b>	<b>Stockbridge</b>	14
<b>Lanesboro</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>Tyringham</b>	<5
<b>Lee*</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>Washington</b>	<5
<b>Lenox*</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>West Stockbridge</b>	<5
<b>Monterey</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>Williamstown*</b>	83
<b>Mount Washington</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>Windsor</b>	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.

## **Updated Quarantine and Isolation Notices in 10 Languages**

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

## **Berkshire County Volunteer Opportunities**

The Berkshire United Way (BUW) has implemented an online volunteer reception center, as well as a virtual donation center for monetary donations. Individuals in your communities who are interested in volunteering for the COVID-19 response, but aren't sure where to start, can be directed to the BUW's volunteer sign up form, found here: <https://www.berkshireunitedway.org/volunteer-advocate>.

## **Berkshire Medical Reserve Corps**

If your community or Board is in need of volunteer assistance related to COVID-19, please contact the Medical Reserve Corps. Volunteer Coordinator, Carmela Lanza-Weil at [carmela.lanza.weil@gmail.com](mailto:carmela.lanza.weil@gmail.com). You can also fill out and submit the [Volunteer Request Form](#). Volunteers are background checked and trained.

## **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.

## **Emergency Sheltering in Berkshire County**

The former St. Joe's school in Pittsfield has been retrofitted as a shelter for homeless individuals and is now operational. It is being operated by Service Net with medical assistance from Community Health Programs (CHP) and also contains locations suitable for quarantined individuals.

## **Routine and other Board of Health Inspections**

**Information on BOH inspections and other functions can be found [HERE](#).**

### ***Housing Inspections***

Given the State of Emergency, the LBOH has discretion to delay non-emergency inspections. Inspections should resume as normal at the termination of the State of Emergency.

### ***Food Inspections***

A LBOH has discretion to decrease the frequency of food inspections under the retail food code. (105 CMR 590.008(H); FC 8-401.10.) During the declared State of Emergency, LBOH are not required to submit a risk-based facility inspection plan for approval.

The EPA has provided a list of registered sanitizers labeled for use against the novel coronavirus [HERE](#). Additional guidance on inspecting food establishments is available. Note that when food establishments closed due to COVID reopen, pre-opening inspections are not required (at the discretion of the local BOH).

### **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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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. All 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>
- 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 May 27, there have been 94,220 confirmed 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 552,144. There have been 6,547 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 1,637,456 reported cases in the United States as of May 25, and 97,669 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](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)