



MAPCHO Messaging for Residents week ending Friday 5/8

YOUR LOCAL HEALTH BOARDS ARE WORKING FOR YOU

Please know that your local Boards of Health are working together with your other local government partners every day to maintain the health and safety of both you and your neighbors. Board of Health members and our staff participate in several conference calls each week with state government representatives from the Governor's office, the Department of Public Health (DPH), and the MA Emergency Management Agency (MEMA). On these calls, local Boards work to clarify the specifics of state orders and guidance and their implications in our communities, as well as learn more about statewide initiatives such as the [Community Tracing Collaborative](#).

Boards then come together regionally, collaborating with each other in Franklin County through the Mohawk Area Public Health Coalition to share on-the-ground information and best practices. We also work in smaller inter-municipal groups to share resources and information on what is happening in the immediate moment, as well as looking to the future to consider what the impacts of COVID-19 response will have later this summer and fall. Lastly, each Board works directly with our other local government partners including the municipal Emergency Management Director, first responders such as police, fire, and EMS, as well as elected officials. Together, these local government bodies work to develop specific plans for issues such as upcoming Town Meetings and elections, and initiatives such as ensuring food and housing are available for all in our community.

Your Local Health Boards are working with multiple sectors to ensure safety at all levels of community, and we appreciate the efforts and sacrifices you are making during this critical time!

STAY THE COURSE, YOU ARE MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Governor Baker's emergency order requiring all businesses and organizations that do not provide "COVID19 Essential Services" to close their physical workplaces and facilities to workers, customers and the public, as well as his Stay at Home Advisory continue until May 18th. After that point, many physical distancing policies and procedures will still be with us. Again, think of these strategies as a dial being adjusted, not a switch being turned on or off.

Governor Baker's [Reopening Advisory Board](#) brings public health officials together with health and government leaders to advise the administration on strategies to reopen the economy in phases. This group will get input from a variety of constituencies to develop a report by May 18th that will include workplace safety standards, customer protocols and guidelines, including enforcement mechanisms and coordination with municipal leaders. The report is due on the 18th, but the administration has made clear that public health data and guidance from health care experts will dictate the timeline of the re-opening process.

Stay patient, and resilient! The changes and sacrifices you make in your daily activities today are creating a healthier and safer environment for you, your loved ones, and your neighbors. Only leave your home to address essential needs, get some fresh air and exercise, and if you do, avoid unnecessary contact with other individuals.

FACE COVERING ORDER NOW IN EFFECT

Effective last Wednesday, May 6th, Governor Baker issued an order requiring individuals to wear face coverings in public places. Any person who is in a place open to the public in the Commonwealth, when unable to maintain a distance of approximately six feet from every other person, shall cover their mouth and nose with a mask or cloth face covering. This order applies to both indoor and outdoor spaces. Exceptions include children under the age of 2 and those unable to wear a mask or face covering due to a medical condition.

Face coverings are required at all times when:

- Inside or waiting in line outside of grocery stores, pharmacies, and other retail stores;
- Providing or using the services of any taxi, car, livery, ride-sharing, or similar service;
- On any form of public transit, including train or bus; and
- In an enclosed or semi-enclosed transit stop or waiting area.

The use of a face covering does not replace important social distancing measures. All individuals must continue to maintain more than 6 feet of distance from other people; wash hands regularly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds; and stay home when sick.

You can read more about the face-covering order at: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/guidance-for-face-masks-in-public-settings/download>

TESTING FOR COVID-19

If you think you may have [symptoms](#), first call your health care provider. If your clinician thinks you should be tested but they are unable to offer a test at their own health care facility, they will provide a referral, and you can be tested at test site near you (Franklin County residents can be tested through Baystate Franklin Medical Center). **These are not walk-in sites. An appointment is necessary.**

To read more about COVID-19 testing in the Commonwealth, visit: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-testing>

To see a full listing of testing sites for residents throughout the Commonwealth, visit: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/ma-covid-19-testing-sites/download>