

**MetroWest  
Center For  
Independent Living**

**People with Disabilities  
Living in the Community**

## **Covid-19 Updates**

MWCIL continues to be staffed and ready to work with you on any important issues. We will try to resolve as much as possible remotely to protect both our staff and consumers. We understand that most services and safety nets have been disrupted, and we will try to help.

We continue to keep our [Website Covid-19 page](#) updated, as well as our [Local Resources pdf](#).

Of interest this week are instructions on how to get the Economic Impact Payment from the government more quickly. We also have disturbing information from John Winske of the Disability Policy Consortium about people with disabilities in Massachusetts and Covid-19.

Paul Spooner,  
Executive Director



Bloodroot

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## ***MetroWest Resources***

MWCIL.org has a Covid-19 page with local and national resources, information on the disease, and more. Visit [mwcil.org](http://mwcil.org).

MetroWest Center for Independent Living has compiled information from most of our service area towns. You can download this file:

[MWCIL Service area resources.pdf](#)

We recommend Senate President Karen Spilka's page of resources available for MetroWest residents. Visit <https://karenspilka.com/covid>.

City of Framingham Resource Page: [Framinghamma.gov/covid19](http://Framinghamma.gov/covid19)

Resources for elders in the community provided by [Baypath Senior Services](#): [Senior Living Service during Covid-10.pdf](#).

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## ***Economic Impact Payment***

If you filed your income taxes for 2018 and 2019, and you provided a direct deposit bank account to the IRS, you should be all set and assuming you are eligible, can expect a deposit into your account. The deposits are targeted to begin this week.

Visit <https://www.irs.gov/coronavirus/economic-impact-payments> for

more information. The links below are drilled down from this link.

### **Who is eligible?**

[www.irs.gov/coronavirus/economic-impact-payment-information-center](http://www.irs.gov/coronavirus/economic-impact-payment-information-center)

### **What to do if you have not filed taxes?**

[www.irs.gov/coronavirus/non-filers-enter-payment-info-here](http://www.irs.gov/coronavirus/non-filers-enter-payment-info-here)

You should use this application if:

- You **did not file** a 2018 or 2019 federal income tax return because your gross income was under \$12,200 (\$24,400 for married couples). This includes people who had no income. Or
- You **weren't required to file** a 2018 or 2019 federal income tax return for other reasons
- You have dependent children 17 or younger

If you receive these benefits, we already have your information and you will receive \$1,200. Do **not** use this application if you receive:

- Social Security retirement, disability (SSDI), or survivor benefits
- Railroad Retirement and Survivor Benefits

### ***Special note:***

People in these groups who have qualifying children under age 17 can use this application to claim the \$500 payment per child.

### **What to do if you have not set up direct deposit into an account or are not sure if you have set this up? *This application will be available in Mid-April!***

Use the "Get My Payment" application (coming mid-April) to:

- Check your payment status
- Confirm your payment type: direct deposit or check
- Enter your bank account information for direct deposit if we don't have your direct deposit information and we haven't sent your payment yet

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## ***Rationing Health Care in MA April 13, 2020 by John Winske***

Editorial from the Disability Policy Consortium:

Massachusetts had always been different. Unafraid to strike a blow to public policy to ensure that everyone had a chance. We were the first to mandate a free education for all children (we will for the sake of expediency of course ignore children with disabilities). First with universal health insurance for all, and first to ensure that marriage was available for all.

When it came to the issue of rationing care in a pandemic, I hoped and prayed we would be different. The Disability Policy Consortium (DPC) spent the last 18 months educating staff at MassHealth, EHS and Health Care for All about Quality of Adjusted Life Years (QALY). As a reminder QALY is an economic data tool which values the life of a person living with a disability lower than that of a healthy person. In short, it assumes we, people with disabilities, lead unhappy, unfulfilled and thus less worthy lives. I wanted to believe that our educational efforts were paying off.

Then on Tuesday April 7, 2020, a headline in the Boston Globe screamed "[Who gets a ventilator? New gut-wrenching state guidelines issued on rationing equipment](#)". The story noted "assign patients a score that gives preference to healthier patients who have a greater chance of surviving their illness and living longer overall. It gives additional preference to medical personnel who are vital to treating others, and to women further along in pregnancy. In the event of tie scores, younger patients are given priority."

The standards do have a non-discrimination clause, which "made clear that race, disability, socioeconomic status, "perceived social worth," immigration status, incarceration status, and other similar factors are "irrelevant and not to be considered by providers making allocation decisions."

There is no way to square the scoring statement with the non-discrimination clause. You are asking human beings to assign a score and to decide who is in better health and will live longer. A crystal ball is needed to determine who will live longer. Just by asking who is in better health you are bringing ableism to the table. We also know that people of color are more likely to be in poorer health for a wide variety of reasons. This policy is throwing the social determinants of health out the door.

Sadly, this policy only reinforces privilege. It favors people in our society who are healthy and able to maintain their health. The Commonwealth tasked people of privilege (bioethicists) to design a policy, to be overseen by a group of people (doctors) who are more likely than not to come from privilege to determine who lives and who dies. Really? What could go wrong?

The most annoying part of this policy is that it destroys trust between disability advocates and the staff of MassHealth and EHS. Both sides have put in hundreds of hours in reviewing public policies to build a more inclusive health care system. Once again, when push came to shove, we got the heave-ho. Our public officials did not live up to their capabilities of building a more inclusive health care policy. They did not match our Commonwealth's illustrious history of thinking about ALL of our residents.

And I was naïve.

John E. Winske  
Former Executive Director, DPC

## ***Nearly Half of MA Coronavirus Deaths Come From Long-Term Care Homes***

Thank you to the Disability Policy Consortium for this story too: "[The Patch](#) reported that nearly half of the 686 deaths in Massachusetts (44%) due to COVID-19 are from Long Term care facilities. This includes 37 fatalities at the Holyoke Soldiers Home. Between this story and the potential rationing of care away from people with compromised health, this has not been a good month to be a person with a disability. I must be honest, at this point I am almost too outraged to even approach this issue rationally. If it is not crystal clear that, as a society and a Commonwealth, we are failing our residents with compromised health, then I am not sure what evidence would suffice." by John Winske

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### ***Mass.gov Resources***

**Main information page** on the Coronavirus:

<https://www.mass.gov/resource/information-on-the-outbreak-of-coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19>

#### **Mass Health:**

- **Long Term Supports and Services including PCA information:** <https://www.mass.gov/doc/ltss-provider-updates-for-covid-19/download>
- Expansion of **Home Health Aide Services:** [MassOptions.org](https://www.massoptions.org). **MassOptions hotline** at 1-844-422-6277
- **Consumer Information:** <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/masshealth-coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19-applicants-and-members-0>
- **General MassHealth Information:** [www.mass.gov/coronavirus-disease-covid-19-and-masshealth](https://www.mass.gov/coronavirus-disease-covid-19-and-masshealth)
- **90 Day Supplies of Medication for MassHealth Members:** [www.mass.gov/doc/pharmacy-facts-141-march-12-2020-0/download](https://www.mass.gov/doc/pharmacy-facts-141-march-12-2020-0/download)

**Attorney General:** <https://www.mass.gov/guides/resources-during-covid-19>

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### ***Unemployment***

Mass.gov has an online, virtual town hall that will teach you how to sign up for unemployment. Visit [www.mass.gov/forms/massachusetts-department-of-unemployment-assistance-dua-virtual-town-halls](https://www.mass.gov/forms/massachusetts-department-of-unemployment-assistance-dua-virtual-town-halls).

Or visit the State Unemployment Insurance page for online application forms, as well as links to rules and exceptions during the Covid-19 pandemic. [www.mass.gov/unemployment-insurance-ui-online](http://www.mass.gov/unemployment-insurance-ui-online).

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## ***Food***

Visit [foodpantries.org](http://foodpantries.org) to see all of the food pantries in MA.

Senate President Karen Spilka's MetroWest Resource page has many local food sources: [karenspilka.com/updates/2020/3/13/metrowest-covid-19-resources](http://karenspilka.com/updates/2020/3/13/metrowest-covid-19-resources)

Project Bread has additional food sources: [www.projectbread.org/get-help](http://www.projectbread.org/get-help).

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## ***Housing***

Department of Community and Housing Development (DHCD) has information including updates for Residential Assistance for Families in Transition (RAFT) Program - [www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-dhcd-website#residential-assistance-for-families-in-transition-\(raft\)-program-and-covid-19-state-of-emergency-](http://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-dhcd-website#residential-assistance-for-families-in-transition-(raft)-program-and-covid-19-state-of-emergency-)

As the COVID-19 situation rapidly evolves, CHAPA is adapting their operations and policy priorities. COVID-19 Affordable Housing Resources: [www.chapa.org](http://www.chapa.org)

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## ***MWRTA***

MWRTA has made some changes to help keep riders and drivers safe. Read this update by Emily Van Dewoestine:

"MWRTA's COVID-19 has quickly made an impact on everyone's lives. MWRTA is doing everything we can to keep all of our drivers and passengers safe. MWRTA is disinfecting all vehicles every night, and additionally during the day as needed, as well as providing drivers with disposable gloves, bottles of hand sanitizer, and, when requested, face masks. MWRTA has increased cleaning and disinfecting measures throughout the entire building, and is not allowing any non-essential visitors. Here is a little positivity: Hang in there. Your rainbow is on its way! Stay safe and healthy!

To continue our approach and focus on keeping all drivers and passengers as safe as possible, MWRTA will not be enforcing the fare policy beginning on Monday, April 6, 2020. Additionally, we have closed off every other

seat in the Fixed Route buses to ensure that passengers are sitting a safe distance from one another. We ask that passengers only take public transportation for essential travel, including grocery stores, pharmacies, and work. If you feel sick please stay home. MWRTA is focused on staying up-to-date with information on COVID-19 and taking all measures necessary to ensure a safe and clean ride for all. MWRTA would like to thank our extremely dedicated employees who are committed to coming into work everyday to take people where they need to go. We understand that this is a challenging time for everyone, and your dedication and commitment to your jobs and to serving the public have not gone unnoticed. If you have any questions or concerns regarding bus service, please call (508) 935-2222. Riders can find service updates at [www.MWRTA.com](http://www.MWRTA.com) or on Twitter @MWRTA.

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### ***Visual Informational Posters***

These three graphical posters will clarify some of the confusing aspects of Covid-19.

- Coping with Stress and Fear from Covid-19: [Coping-Flyer-HQP.pdf](#)
  - Social Distancing: [Soc-Dist-Flyer-GenAud.pdf](#)
  - Stop the Spread: [Stop-The-Spread.pdf](#)
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### ***Podcast from the Disability Visibility Project***

Also from the Disability Policy Consortium is a link to a podcast episode "about the coronavirus and caregiving with Dawn Gibson and Heather Watkins. Dawn is the founder and host of the Spoonie Chat, an online community on Twitter and Facebook, she's also a patient advocate, writer, and consultant. Heather is a Boston-based disability rights activist, author, mother, speaker. Dawn and Heather talk about how they are taking care of themselves right now, the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on their daily lives, and their experiences as caregivers. I believe we are modern-day oracles and it's time for people to listen to us."

Alice Wong is the host. If you prefer, you can read the transcript from the podcast. [disabilityvisibilityproject.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Coronavirus-and-Caregiving.pdf](https://disabilityvisibilityproject.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Coronavirus-and-Caregiving.pdf)

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### ***Disability Rights and Healthcare***

We have heard threats and warnings that healthcare may need to be rationed, and that "someone" may have to decide who gets treated and who does not. These warnings are especially frightening for people with disabilities who may feel undervalued. [The Disability Rights and Education Fund](#) has compiled information on this topic.

You can download the pdf document: [Preventing Discrimination in the Treatment of COVID-19 Patients: The Illegality of Medical Rationing on the Basis of Disability.pdf](#).

Alice Wong wrote "**I'm disabled and need a ventilator to live. Am I expendable during this pandemic?**" for [Vox.com](#).

Ariella Barker shared "**Those with disabilities have a right to survive the coronavirus pandemic**" for the [Boston Globe](#).

From the **Center for Dignity in Healthcare for People with Disabilities** - one page fact sheet for health care providers: [fact sheet rights for people with disabilities.pdf](#).

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### *Free Time*

If you have time to spare, check out our videos of people with disabilities living independently in Massachusetts at [MATalesOfIndependence.net](#). Get to know our own rock stars!



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### *2020 Census*

You should have received one or two mailings from the Census Bureau on how to fill out your census information online. This information is completely confidential. Please let us know if you have questions. Visit the [Revupma.org page](#) on the Census.

#### **From Marlene Sallo, Executive Director of Disability Law Center**

"On April 1, 2019 elected officials, nonprofit workers, and the public gathered at Nevins Hall in Framingham to kick off the state's 2020 census. This event marked the one-year countdown to the National Census Day (April 1, 2020).

The census is mandated by our Constitution and aims to include every person living in the United States. Census data provides the basis for distributing more than \$675 billion in federal funds every year to support states, counties and community programs, such as housing, education,



transportation, employment, and health care.

During the 2020 Census, households will be able to self-respond in three ways: Internet, Telephone or Paper Questionnaire. The Census Bureau has indicated that the online questionnaire and telephone contact centers will all be fully accessible to people with disabilities and that the paper questionnaire will be available to download in both braille and large print. Completing the 2020 Census form ensures that neighborhood schools, health centers, and other vital parts of our communities are adequately funded.

Please make sure to participate in the upcoming census. Find out more at [www.censuscounts.org](http://www.censuscounts.org).

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## Activist Resources and Directories

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### *National Contact Information*

[Directory of House of Representatives](#)

[Directory of Senators](#)

#### **Senator Edward J. Markey**

Address:

255 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington DC 20510

Phone:

(202) 224-2742

Contact:

[www.markey.senate.gov/contact](http://www.markey.senate.gov/contact)

Website:

<http://www.markey.senate.gov/>

#### **Senator Elizabeth Warren**

Address:

317 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington DC 20510

Phone:

(202) 224-4543

Contact:

<https://www.warren.senate.gov/contact/shareyouropinion>

Website:

<http://www.warren.senate.gov/>

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## ***State Government Contact Information***

[Directories of State Senators and Representatives](#)

[Contact Governor Baker](#)

[WhereDoIVoteMa.com](#) - Enter your address, and get a list of all of your elected officials.

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### ***National Resources***

**Save My Care** - a movement to bring together families, advocates and health care providers to protect the health and financial security of all Americans. [Visit the website.](#)

**National Council on Independent Living** has Action Alerts for issues on the table in Washington. [Visit the Advocacy Monitor webpage.](#)

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**Join REV UP** - Make the disability vote count!

For more information, visit [www.revupma.org](http://www.revupma.org).

And follow our [Face Book page!](#)

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### ***Disability Pride Toolkit***

[NCIL](#) (National Council on Independent Living) has compiled a [Disability Pride Toolkit and Resource Guide](#).

This guide delves into what Disability Pride is, and why it is so important. The difference between the Medical Model and the Independent Living paradigm offer a framework of the disparities between how society works and how it should work.

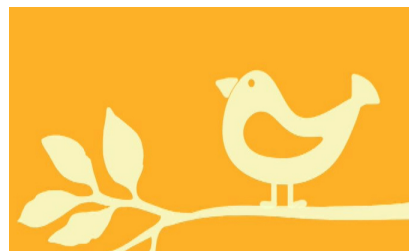
The guide also offers many resources and ideas on how to advance the discussion and how to educate others. *We highly recommend this toolkit and resource guide for anyone who wants to be active in the fight for disability rights!*

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# MA Tales of Independence

Visit our video projects at: [www.matalesofindependence.net](http://www.matalesofindependence.net).

The concept and history of Independent Living are complex. MA Tales of Independence is a collection of videos by people who are successfully living independently. Each person tells their story including things like: how they achieved independence, why independence is important to them and what barriers they had to overcome. Some of our videos have historical information about the struggle and others are about growing up today. Most have college degrees, jobs and families.



2020 Staff


## MetroWest Center for Independent Living

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