

**MetroWest
Center For
Independent Living**

**People with Disabilities
Living in the Community**

Covid-19 Updates

MWCIL is ready to work with you on any important issues. We will 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.

Our [Website Covid-19 page](#) is updated, as well as our [Local Resources pdf](#).

We have a story this week from DPC about a special enrollment period at MassConnector for those who have lost employer based health insurance.

The news from nursing homes and other institutions is horrible.

How are you making out? We have all had to be flexible - some more than others. Send us your experiences - what has been going well and what problems are you having - and we will share them in the next newsletter. We can all learn from each other.

Let's hope we are all as resilient as these daffodils!

Paul Spooner,
Executive Director



April 18



April 20

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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.

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

- Framingham has announced a financial relief program which will help provide assistance with rent, mortgage, and/or utility payments for a period of two months to alleviate the burden on households which have seen a loss of employment and their primary income as of 3/10/2020. Download the application:
www.framinghamma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/37558/CDBG-Rental-Assistance--Application

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

MWRTA has launched the "4 Grocery" shuttle to run hourly between 7 a.m. and 5 p.m. to carry shoppers from the Framingham hub to the Market Basket in Ashland, Roche Bros. in Natick, and the Wegman's at the Natick Mall. Read more at www.mwrta.com.

Institutions and Covid-19

We reported on this last week, but the stories continue to unfold.

From WCVB TV Channel 5, [Nearly half of developmentally disabled at state home infected with coronavirus](#) by Kevin Rothstein on April 17.

From MassLive.com, [Coronavirus: Which Massachusetts nursing homes have confirmed cases of COVID-19?](#) by Greg Saulmon on April 22.

From MassLive.com, [Massachusetts House passes a bill requiring COVID-19 reports from nursing homes, assisted-living facilities](#) by Steph Solis on April 21.

From the Boston Globe, [Mass. pausing part of its nursing home testing program; state data riddled with inaccuracies](#) by Laura Krantz, Laura Crimaldi and Robert Weisman on April 21.

Health Connector Special Enrollment Expanded

Thanks to the [Disability Policy Consortium](#) for this story from **Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation**.

Massachusetts residents losing their jobs and job-based health coverage can get health coverage through the Health Connector. Massachusetts residents can apply for coverage at www.mahealthconnector.org. The ConnectorCare program connects qualifying Massachusetts residents with affordable health coverage with low or \$0 premiums and low co-pays and no deductibles. This special enrollment period will run through May 25.

A new webpage that includes all the information someone would need to get into coverage after having lost employment/employment-based coverage - including a detailed FAQ for people trying to understand their different coverage options (e.g., COBRA, Health Connector, etc.). You can find that webpage here: <https://www.mahealthconnector.org/the-right-plan-right-now>.

Shorter PDF flyers for individuals that have recently lost jobs and job-based health coverage. These are available in English, Spanish, Portuguese, and Chinese and are posted here: <https://www.mahealthconnector.org/help-center/resource-download-center>

Reach out to the Health Connector with questions.

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.

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

What to do if you have not filed taxes?

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

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
- **90 Day Supplies of Medication for MassHealth Members:** www.mass.gov/doc/pharmacy-facts-141-march-12-2020-0/download

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

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.

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.

Food

Visit [foodpantries.org](https://www.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](https://www.karenspilka.com/updates/2020/3/13/metrowest-covid-19-resources)

Project Bread has additional food sources: www.projectbread.org/get-help.

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-

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

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 or on Twitter @MWRTA.

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](#)

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](#).

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!



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 #2020Census, 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 #2020Census 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."

Activist Resources and Directories

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

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/>

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.

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.](#)

Join REV UP - Make the disability vote count!

For more information, visit www.revupma.org.

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



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!*

MA Tales of Independence

Visit our video projects at: 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

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