

**MetroWest  
Center For  
Independent Living**

**People with Disabilities  
Living in the Community**

## **Covid-19 Updates**

*Are we there yet?* While some states are beginning to open and plans are being considered for future phased openings in Massachusetts, the impacts on our daily lives are not going to go away. We have heard some good news for people with disabilities, such as employers now know how to let people work at home. Unfortunately, there is much about the future that we do not know - funding of necessary services, mechanisms for advocacy and the safety of the outside world. The online world has been invaluable, but not everyone is on the internet. We will have to work harder to make sure everyone is safe and well.

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.

Visit our [Website Covid-19 page](#) and download our [Local Resources pdf](#).

Paul Spooner,  
Executive Director



Tulip bouquet from Painted Lady Flower Farm in Franklin

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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)

- 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](http://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/application/files/2715/8715/4486/4\\_Groceries\\_Schedule.pdf](http://www.mwrta.com/application/files/2715/8715/4486/4_Groceries_Schedule.pdf).

**SMOC** (South Middlesex Opportunity Council) continues to provide a wide array of services. Visit their website for more information: [www.smoc.org](http://www.smoc.org)

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### ***At MWCIL***

The staff at MWCIL has been getting more than the usual number of callers with issues of their own, or worrying about their neighbors. MWCIL has been able to help callers by directing them to available resources. It feels like almost every aspect of our lives is different, if not totally disrupted.

One example is a caller was wondering about internet hot spots, as libraries are closed. Low income housing has not implemented these hot spots, but the two Framingham libraries have parking lot hot spots in their parking lots!

The TAP program is going well as Heidi is using ConoverCompany.com to virtually work on functional and social skills with the TAP students.

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### ***3 Ways The COVID-19 Pandemic Could Change Disability Policies And Practices***

by Andrew Pulrang for Forbes Magazine, April 20

Andrew Pulrang takes a more hopeful future for people with disabilities. One thing we can all agree on is that things will not be the same. Read the article for his thoughtful perspective on these issues.

1. A wider acceptance of doing business online, "from home."
2. A new urgency to the trend away from congregate care.
3. More attention to disability issues ... or less?

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/andrewpulrang/2020/04/20/3-ways-the-covid-19-pandemic-could-change-disability-policies-and-practices/#5d4657cc6706>

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### ***Thank you to John Winske***

We have been fortunate to have John Winske of the Disability Policy Consortium bringing us the important disability news for the last 8 years in his weekly Monday newsletter. John's last email was this past Monday. His newsletter nailed it every single week - not only ferreting out the important stories, but also interpreting their importance to the disability community. He educated us, alerted us and celebrated people with disabilities. Almost every week, we shared his stories in our MWCIL alerts and on Facebook.

John will be continuing his work:

"While I will be moving on, from the DPC and this publication, I will be remaining in the disability arena. This is a lifetime commitment that was determined by the gene pool even before I took my first breath. I will be starting two new projects, one short term and one longer. The short-term project is Disability Advocacy in the New Normal or DAINN.org. We need to have a deep discussion about disability advocacy given the constraints of the pandemic. People such as I, with compromised breathing or immune systems, are most assuredly under virtual house arrest for the next two years. And even after we make it through this storm, the drive to cut the deficit spending by government will be vicious and unyielding by a large political block. If you want to join the conversation, you can reach me at [john@DAINN.org](mailto:john@DAINN.org).

The larger project I am starting is Disability Launchpad. We will be incubating virtual organizations and businesses which will employ and be run by people with disabilities. Because too many businesses today are still not employing members of our community, we must step up and take the lead. We will also work to eliminate the barriers that government places in front of people who must rely on the government for their health insurance and financial support, while they try to break the bonds of poverty. Again, if you want to follow my

journey or help out I can be reached at [john@disabilitylaunchpad.com](mailto:john@disabilitylaunchpad.com)."

*Thank you John!*



Paul and John Winske at 2014 Gubernatorial forum

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## ***We're Literally Killing Elders Now***

by Elaine Godfrey for Atlantic Magazine, April 29

Elaine Godfrey lost her grandmother to Covid-19 at an assisted living facility in Minnesota. She details many of the issues with institutional care. The paragraph below, from the article, sums it up:

"Nursing-home residents aren't getting half of our resources or half of our attention, yet they account for roughly half the deaths," David Grabowski, a health-care-policy professor at Harvard Medical School, told me. This, he said, reveals-or maybe reinforces-a devastating truism about American society: "We don't value their lives as much as other people's."

Sound familiar? MWCIL will continue to advocate for everyone's right to live independently, but in reality, institutions will never go away. And as with living at home, everyone needs to be safe.

<https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2020/04/coronavirus-especially-deadly-nursing-homes/610855/>

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## ***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](http://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.

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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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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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## ***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](http://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](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](#)!



## ***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.

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2020 Staff

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