

**MetroWest
Center For
Independent Living**

**People with Disabilities
Living in the Community**

Covid-19 Updates

Phase 2 - MA now allows many types of businesses to open their doors *with regulations in place to prevent further spread of Covid-19*. Each individual must study these safeguards to determine if the regulations are personally adequate.

Across the country, each state has its own set of reopening regulations. Many health experts are concerned that this reopening is happening too quickly.

On the positive side, services should be approaching full capacity.

We also have some news on voting. The MA Senate passed an important bill. And disability voter education and registration efforts continue.

MWCIL is working on plans to continue to provide services with awareness that the virus is still here. We are developing new on-line capabilities, and defining new in-office protocols.

The center 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



Baltimore Oriole feeds babies



Mother turkey and babies



Staff zoom meeting

In This Issue

Articles:

- [MetroWest Resources](#)
- [MetroWest Test Sites](#)
- [Testing Sites](#)
- [Wear a Mask](#)
- [Massachusetts Reopening](#)
- [ADAPT on Congregate Institutions](#)
- [Nursing Homes](#)
- [MA Voting 2020](#)
- [Disability Voting 2020](#)
- [Face Masks for PCAs](#)
- [Local Elections](#)
- [Health Connector Expanded Enrollment](#)
- [Mass.gov](#)
- [Unemployment](#)
- [Food Pantries](#)
- [Housing](#)
- [2020 Census](#)

Information for Activists:

- [National Contact Info](#)
- [State Contact Info](#)
- [National Resources](#)
- [REV UP Massachusetts](#)

[MA Tales of Independence](#)

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. This file is updated weekly:
[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/

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/.

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

Testing Sites

Visit this interactive, online map to find testing sites statewide:
memamaps.maps.arcgis.com

Wear a mask

Forbes Magazine published an article on June 13: [Face Masks May Be The Key Determinant Of The Covid-19 Curve, Study Suggests](#) by Alice G. Walton.

"A new study out in the journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences finds that among all the strategies for reducing transmission, wearing face masks may be the central variable that determines the spread of the virus. "

Massachusetts Reopening

We are in the midst of Governor Baker's Phase 2 of reopening Massachusetts.

[Masslive.com](https://www.masslive.com) published a good article on June 8 with many details on Phase 2.

Visit [Mass.gov](https://www.mass.gov) to learn the details of reopening, including workplace protocols, and business safety standards. If you are not comfortable with a salon's cleaning protocols, then do not get your hair cut or find another salon.

National ADAPT Statement on Covid-19 Deaths in Segregated Congregate Institutions

"It is time to recognize the similarities between systemic police violence and systems that imprison people, how race and disability intertwine, and how all congregate institutions including prisons, institutions for people with developmental disabilities, psychiatric institutions, and immigrant detention camps arise from systems designed to oppress those whom society devalues.

Covid-19 has killed over 32,750 disabled people in substandard nursing homes in the United States, with a disparate number of those being people of color. National ADAPT is compelled to speak out against this widespread and horrifying human rights catastrophe.

ADAPT strongly denounces the ongoing human rights violations committed against disabled people in all congregate care settings, and we reject the notion that age and underlying conditions sufficiently explain the outrageously high rate of death in these institutions. The occurrence of neglect, abuse, terror, and despair that disabled people experience daily in these facilities is well documented. Yet we continue to be socially removed from our families, homes, and communities in the name of cost-effectiveness, efficiency, or worse, for the convenience and comfort of non-disabled society, and the profit of health care professionals and shareholders.

No longer will we excuse or abide the socially accepted biases that dehumanize disabled people...."

Download the entire statement: [National ADAPT Statement on Covid.docx](#).

Or read the statement at [NationalADAPT.org](https://www.NationalADAPT.org).

Nursing Home Blame Game

We are familiar with the exceedingly high death rates in nursing homes and other congregate living facilities.

This article published June 15 in MassLive.com: [Trapped in a petri dish: Nursing home coronavirus deaths part of political blame game between Trump administration and Democrats](#) tries to unpack what has gone wrong.

"The Trump administration has been pointing to a segment of the industry - facilities with low federal ratings for infection control - and to some Democratic governors who required nursing homes to take recovering coronavirus patients."

Among other things, Democrats state that "The lack of federal coordination certainly has impeded facilities' ability to identify infected persons and to provide care".

"With more coronavirus legislation possible this year, congressional Democrats are pressing for a national testing plan and additional resources for nursing homes. Republicans are mainly seconding the administration's arguments."

Harvard researcher David Grabowski " says it's simpler: Because the virus can be spread by people who show no symptoms, that means if it's already in a community, the staff can unwittingly bring it into the nursing home. Once inside it easily spreads among frail residents living in close quarters."

Grabowski " proposed a federal effort to regularly test nursing home staff and residents, along with greater supplies of masks, gowns and other protective gear."

The government solutions will be partisan, but the virus is not. Let's hope that both sides can stay focused on the big picture.

Massachusetts Voting in 2020

Voting in 2020 has been, and will continue to be an issue. Traditional voting does not follow social distancing rules, includes sharing pens, booths and automark machines, and does not include decontamination policies.

Massachusetts Senate unanimously passed a new comprehensive law for 2020's primary and general election. Visit [Senate President Karen Spilka's website](#) for an overview. The MA House must now pass the bill. The bill, ***An Act relative to voting options in response to COVID-19***, would, for the first time in state history, give all eligible residents the

opportunity to vote early for the state primary and general election, allow residents to vote-by-mail, and expand absentee ballot access. A key disability amendment was also passed - with important support from MetroWest Senators Rausch and Eldridge: [Amendment 7.pdf](#).

Going forward, we ask everyone to help us keep the AutoMark machine available at all early and regular polling sites. With so many changes, we foresee that this important requirement could be forgotten.

Disability Vote in 2020

With an unsafe world, high rates of deaths in nursing homes, visitor bans even for people who need them, discrimination in rationing health care, and job losses, it has never been more important for the disability community to have a voice at the polls. And it has never been more difficult to reach people!

We have seen positive movement, with almost all presidential candidates preparing disability platforms and the new acceptance of working at home. But going forward, with skyrocketing deficits, who knows if the disability platforms will pan out.

We hope you can participate in the events and with the organizations below, and help get out the disability vote!

REV UP MA (revupma.org) and **National REV UP** (www.aapd.com/advocacy/voting/campaigns) continue to work to educate people with disabilities on the importance of voting. Sign up for REV UP MA emails at revupma.org.

POWER: The Disability Vote is a national, non-partisan Disability and Election virtual summit. The focus will be on learning, sharing, and mobilizing the disability community. Both days will include panels, presentations, and a national call-to-action to disability voters and allies. Registration is free and you are able to register for one or both days.

When:

Monday, June 22 and Tuesday, 23 from 12 Noon - 3:45 ET

Agendas:

[Day 1](#)

[Day 2](#)

Register online (register for each day separately):

eventbrite.com

National Disability Voter Registration Week 2020 is July 13 - 17. Learn more about how you can participate at AAPD.com.

Face Masks for PCAs

Thank you to the Disability Policy Consortium for this information:

Consumers of the Massachusetts PCA program can get **free masks and gloves delivered for PCAs** from their union, [1199SEIU](#). PCAs can order the masks online using the [1199SEIU order form](#).

Town Elections

You can help people with disabilities by asking your town clerk about the AutoMark machine. Even if you do not need or want to use it, the law requires that it be available for everyone. With the current Covid-19 environment, we are afraid that the AutoMark machine will not be a priority. If you identify a problem:

- *Contact the state at 800-462-VOTE (8683) (toll free) or 617-727-2828. You may also e-mail them at elections@sec.state.ma.us.*
- *Contact DLC at 800-872-9992 or 617-723-8455. Visit their website www.dlc-ma.org.*

Visit the state website for more information on the changes to annual town meetings during covid 19, including an application that you can download and print: www.sec.state.ma.us/ele/covid-19.

If your town has a local election scheduled in the next few weeks, you should [contact your town clerk](#) about the status of that election. A new law has been passed to allow towns to postpone their local elections by a local vote. Some towns with upcoming elections have already obtained court orders to allow them to move their elections.

Whether or not your town has postponed your local election, a law has been passed to allow early voting by mail in local elections being held on or before June 30, 2020. You may [apply now for your mail-in early ballot](#). If your town's election has been moved, ballots for the original election date will still be valid. If you have already submitted an absentee ballot, that ballot will be counted.

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 June 23.

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.

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>

Housing

The state is implementing a temporary moratorium on evictions and foreclosures due to Covid 19. If you are having trouble making rent, talk to your landlord and get everything in writing for proof of conversations later on.

- **Detailed information** (a little tough to navigate) - www.mass.gov/lists/moratorium-on-evictions-and-foreclosures-forms-and-other-resources
- **RESIDENTIAL TENANTS:** In order to avoid having to pay late fees

or receiving a negative credit report, the law requires tenants to send a form of hardship notice to their landlord within 30 days of every missed rent payment. That means if a tenant missed paying rent due April 1, the tenant must send the form by April 30 (3 days from now). One form must be filled out for each month of missed payment. If a tenant is unable to fill out and transmit the form, they can also email or post a letter to the landlord with the same information. Direct link to form: www.mass.gov/doc/form-of-notice-and-documentation-covid-19-hardship-residential-tenant/download

- **HOMEOWNERS:** The Division of Banks has also put out a Frequently Asked Questions document regarding the moratorium on foreclosures. Direct link here: www.mass.gov/doc/chapter-65-dob-faq
- **SMALL BUSINESS TENANTS:** Similar to residential tenants, small businesses are also not subject to late fees or negative credit bureau reporting if they submit a form of notice to their landlord within 30 days of missed rent payment. Small businesses must submit two forms:
 - A certification of hardship: www.mass.gov/doc/form-of-notice-covid-19-hardship-small-business-tenant
 - Back up documentation: www.mass.gov/doc/documentation-of-financial-hardship-small-business-tenant
- **LANDLORDS:** The law allows the landlord to use last month's rent to pay for certain expenses including, but not limited to, mortgage payments, utilities, repairs and required upkeep. However the landlord must send a form of notice to the tenant when doing so. The form is here: www.mass.gov/doc/notice-to-tenant-use-of-advance-rent-payment
- **Help with Rent**
 - List of regional agencies, see www.masshousinginfo.org/regional-agencies.
 - Additional information about resources for tenants is available at www.mhp.net/news/2020/resources-for-tenants-during-covid-19-pandemic.
- You will not be subject to late fees or a negative report to a credit bureau if you certify to your landlord in writing within 30 days from the missed payment that your non-payment of rent is due to a financial impact from COVID-19. If possible, you should use the approved form at: <https://www.mass.gov/lists/moratorium-on-evictions-and-foreclosures-forms-and-other-resources>. If you cannot access the form on this website, you can ask your landlord to provide the form to you. You may also send a letter or email so long as it contains a detailed explanation of your household loss in income or increase in expenses due to COVID-19.

Department of Community and Housing Development (DHCD)

- 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-)

- [RAFT Policy Changes during COVID-19.php](#)

CHAPA has adapted operations and policy priorities. COVID-19 Affordable Housing Resources: www.chapa.org

Housing Consumer Education Centers - Download the [Covid-19-Housing-Resources.pdf flyer](#).

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 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

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

Massachusetts residents can use SNAP benefits to purchase groceries online via Walmart and Amazon, with more grocery retailers hopefully joining the program soon. Visit Mass.gov for more information. The state's Online Purchasing Program Outreach Flyers are now available in Spanish.

MassHealth Food Assistance Flyers

- [Food Assistance.php](#) - English
 - [Asistencia alimentaria durante la emergencia por COVID-19.php](#)
Spanish
-

2020 Census

Complete your census! This information is completely confidential. Please

let us know if you have questions.

Visit the [Revupma.org page](#) for more information and resources about the Census.

To participate in the upcoming census, visit 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!](#)



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 (visit the [staff page](#) for more info!)

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