

**MetroWest
Center For
Independent Living**

**People with Disabilities
Living in the Community**

Covid-19 Updates

Covid-19 continues to be with us. Phase 3 of the reopening of MA is on indefinite hold while schools and colleges move forward with providing educations. The president seems to be going in a different direction than the science recommends. Luckily, Governor Baker has not changed course as our new infections are holding steady.

We have an insightful survey from DPC, and a new advocacy group, Dignity Alliance, has formed to improve nursing home care and community based services.

MetroWest Center has not yet begun to bring staff back into the office. We are fully staffed on-line and ready to work with all consumers. We will resolve as much as possible remotely to protect both our staff and consumers.

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

Paul Spooner,
Executive Director

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Vote!

The State Primary Election is tomorrow, **September 1**. If you have received a mail in ballot, it is too late to mail it back. However, you may drop it in a drop box (<https://www.sec.state.ma.us/ele/elev/ev-find-my-election-office.htm>) or vote in person on September 1 (<http://www.sec.state.ma.us/WhereDoIVoteMA/bal/MyElectionInfo.aspx>).

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. 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>.

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/.

Covid-19 Testing Sites

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



Map of MA testing sites

Starting August 31st, Framingham will have an additional FREE, open-to-everyone walk-up COVID-19 testing site at
South Middlesex Opportunity Council (SMOC)
7 Bishop Street
Framingham.
Open Mondays, Wednesdays & Fridays 3-6 pm.

Massachusetts Reopening

We are in Phase 3 state wide.
Visit [nbc.com](https://www.nbc.com/news/health/covid-19-testing-sites) for an update.

Residents can submit workplace safety complaints to the Attorney General's webpage. <https://www.mass.gov/forms/report-unsafe-working-conditions-in-massachusetts-during-covid-19>

Governor Baker created a new webpage for worker safety complaints which directs employees to contact their local board of health. <https://www.mass.gov/forms/report-unsafe-working-conditions-in-massachusetts-during-covid-19>

Visit [Mass.gov](https://www.mass.gov) to learn the details of reopening, including workplace protocols, and business safety standards. *Know the risks, and your personal tolerance for risks, and set your own priorities!*

Dignity Alliance Massachusetts

Coalition of Disability and Senior Advocacy Organizations Forms in Response to Nursing Home Deaths

Everyone deserves to live a full life with dignity. However, Covid-19 has

robbed many of that right --- in just over five months more than 5,600 people have died in 379 Massachusetts nursing homes, 88% of the 429 homes in the state, and the toll increases daily. These deaths comprise 15% of all nursing home residents in the state and nearly 66% of all Covid-19 deaths in the Commonwealth. Over 24,000 nursing home residents and staff have tested positive. The mortality rate of infected nursing home residents is more than 22%, three times the rate of the general population.

Dignity Alliance Massachusetts has formed to address the structural and systemic deficiencies which have created this public health crisis. We are committed to implementing and expanding access to essential care improvements and living alternatives that will make the Commonwealth a model of care and living choices.

There can no longer be any doubt about the urgency of the need for comprehensive change to the nursing home model as the predominant institution for long-term care of seniors and people with disabilities. Not only is a fundamental restructuring of facility operations necessary, but as a coalition of advocates with first-hand experience, we are here to say it can be done. New public policies are urgently required to promote community-based services while improving the conditions inside existing facilities. These places remain far too vulnerable at a time when the threat of a Covid-19 resurgence remains high.

In response, Dignity Alliance Massachusetts has organized as a broad-based group representing a wide range of stakeholders, including nursing home resident advocates, disability rights organizations, legal service entities, mental health organizations, health policy experts, faith-based groups, and labor organizations, and those representing the voices of older adults and individuals with disabilities. Our aim is to advance policies that revolutionize long-term care, putting the dignity of individuals first, ensuring affordable options for community living, and providing living wages and benefits for caregivers and service workers in facilities and home and community-based settings.

"A comprehensive effort is needed to promote the dignity of all people in the Commonwealth, especially older adults and those with disabilities. Dignity Alliance seeks to ensure the highest possible quality of care and quality of life for all. The eagerness of so many groups to come together this quickly tells us that the time for change is now," said Arlene Germain, a co-founder of Dignity Alliance Massachusetts and Policy Director of Massachusetts Advocates for Nursing Home Reform.

Richard T. Moore, former Massachusetts Senate Health Care Chair, noted, "Dignity Alliance Massachusetts will pursue changes through legislation, regulation, and operating policies and practices, as well as advancing home and community-based long-term services and affordable, accessible housing options."

"Nursing home residents all have disabilities and straddle all ages," said Bill Henning, Executive Director of the Boston Center for Independent Living, "Our goals are to ensure maximum health and dignity in fully integrated and coordinated settings, and to support workers who provide services and care."

"The nature and function of nursing homes has remained essentially unchanged for the past half century," said former Secretary of the

Massachusetts Executive Office of Elder Affairs, Paul Lanzikos. "Virtually every segment of our society has advanced to try to serve the individualized needs of people with modernized concepts, policies, and practices. It is well past time for nursing homes to meet the needs and expectations of adults and persons with disabilities."

Organizations and individuals interested in learning more about Dignity Alliance Massachusetts or becoming involved are invited to send an email to info@DignityAllianceMA.org.



DPC Survey - How is COVID-19 Affecting Health Care for People with Disabilities?

From the August 31 Disability Policy Consortium Newsletter:

Over the course of this summer, DPC's YESHealth research team reached out to the community to learn how COVID-19 is affecting your healthcare, and the response was enormous: more than four hundred people got back to us to share their concerns and their needs for systemic change. A full-length summary of our findings is attached to this newsletter, but here are a few key highlights:

- Only 25% of adults with a disability who had a Primary Care Provider (PCP) or care team reported that their PCP or a member of their care team reached out to them during the pandemic. For parents of children with disabilities, it was 20%.
- 56% of adult respondents and 53% of parents or guardians responding for a person with disability reported having concerns about lower quality care from medical providers based on disability, race, age, sexual orientation, or gender identity.
- 42% of adult respondents reported having difficulty getting care from essential specialists (e.g. neurologist, urologist, gynecologist, allergist, etc.)
- Over 30% of adult respondents reported trouble getting food.
- More than half of respondents were worried about the quality of care they would receive in a hospital.

Clearly, these results show the need for continued advocacy by DPC and allies throughout the community to ensure that people with disabilities can get quality care during this pandemic.

To get involved in this work, please contact our Director of Advocacy Lenny Somervell at lsomervell@dpcma.org.



Moratorium on Evictions Extended

After announcing another [\\$20 million in funding for homelessness prevention and other community aid](#) last week, Governor Charlie Baker declared an additional 60 day moratorium on evictions.

The moratorium, as reported at [MassLive.com](#), was "originally set to expire Aug. 18, now remains in place until Oct. 17, and puts a pause on "non-essential" eviction cases against residential tenants and small businesses in housing court due to COVID-19. That includes no-cause evictions, those for non-payment of rent, those resulting from a foreclosure or for a cause other than allegations of criminal activity or lease violations threatening public safety."

Needless to say, landlords disagree with this extension. WBUR reported that [Landlords File Legal Challenge to Eviction Moratorium](#).

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](#).

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.mass.gov/doc/home-health-aide-services). **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](http://www.mass.gov/info-details/raft-policy-changes-during-covid-19)

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](http://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-housing-resources) 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. The deadline for completion is September 30, 2020.

Complete the Census by Phone:

Click [COMPLETE by PHONE](#) to learn about the 2020 Census and how to complete it by phone.

Complete the Census by Mail:

Click [COMPLETE by MAIL](#) to learn about the 2020 Census and how to complete it by mail.

Complete the Census Online:

Click [COMPLETE ONLINE](#) to learn more about the 2020 Census and how to complete it online!

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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