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PRESS RELEASE

Baker-Polito Administration Launches New Testing Infrastructure to Increase Testing Capacity & Efficiency Statewide

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

12/07/2020

Office of Governor Charlie Baker and Lt. Governor Karyn Polito

Governor's Press Office

Executive Office of Health and Human Services

Department of Public Health

MEDIA CONTACT

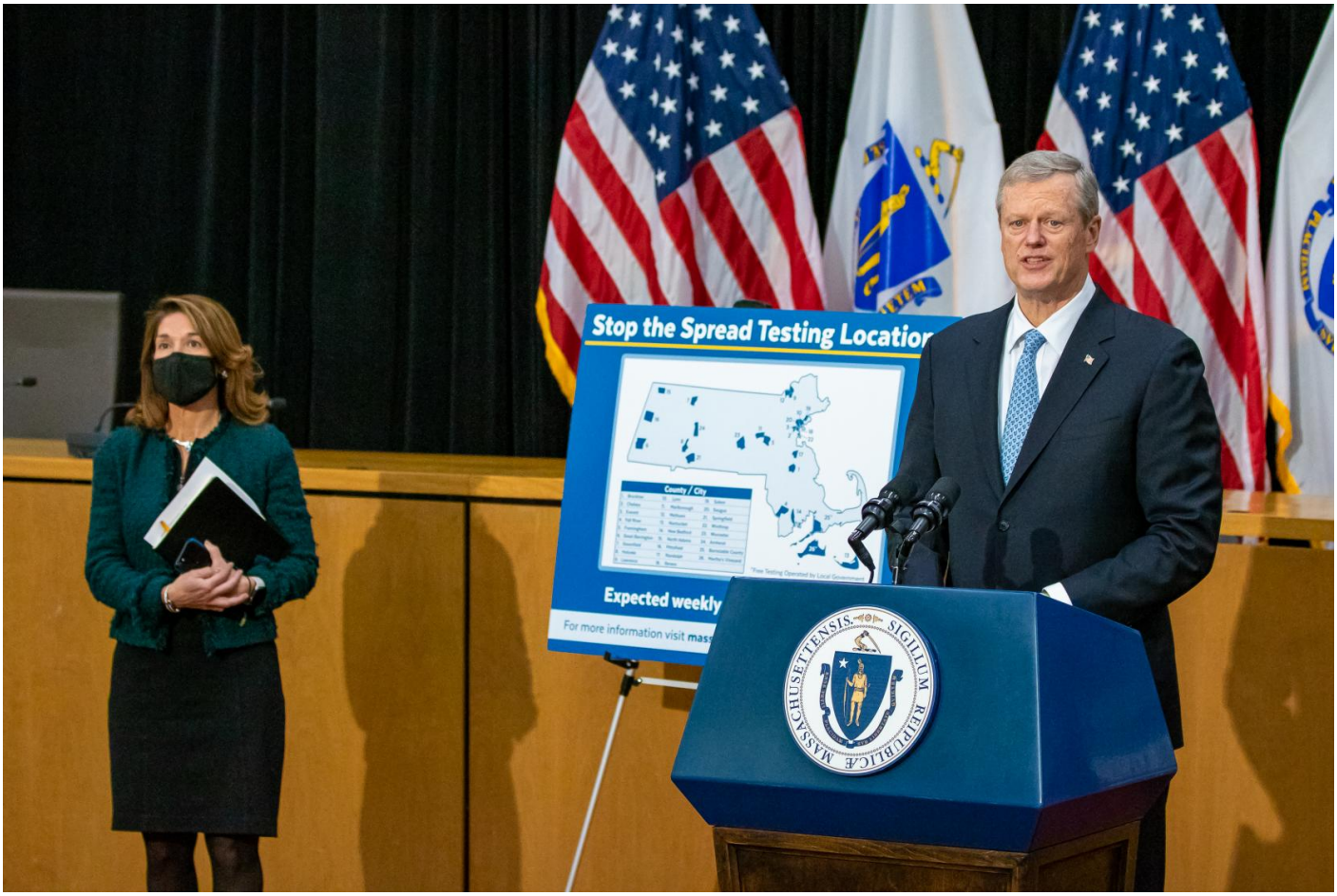
Sarah Finlaw, Press Secretary, Governor's Office

Phone

(617) 725-4025 (tel:6177254025)

Online

gov.press@state.ma.us (mailto:gov.press@state.ma.us)



BOSTON — Building on Massachusetts' nation-leading COVID-19 testing program, the Baker-Polito Administration today announced the Commonwealth will increase testing capacity and locations to provide more access for residents in every county. This plan includes five new locations, and the state plans to collect 110,000 COVID-19 tests per week—representing a 50% testing increase for state-financed and organized testing sites alone. Across Massachusetts, there are more than 350 testing locations available to the public. Massachusetts remains among the top five states for testing per capita in the nation and has made significant progress to increase testing and access.

New Project Beacon Sites: In addition to five new Stop the Spread (STS) locations, three current locations will expand to regional testing sites run by Project Beacon: New Bedford, Framingham and Lynn. Project Beacon currently operates a testing site in Revere and specializes in high-volume testing scheduled through an online platform. Each Project Beacon site will test at least 1,000 individuals per day. The sites are expected to be operational by the end of December, with the site in Framingham launching today.

Western MA & Cape Cod Testing: The Administration also announced expanded testing in Hampshire, Franklin, Berkshire and Barnstable Counties. This includes a partnership with UMass Amherst for free testing in Hampshire County at Amherst, a partnership with Berkshire Health Systems to expand free testing across multiple sites in Berkshire County, and an intent to expand free testing with a mobile provider in Franklin County. These sites are coming online during the coming weeks. The Barnstable County Department of Health and Environment is opening two testing sites, including one in Falmouth with $550,000 in state funds.

To date, the state has allocated more than $150 million for COVID-19 free testing, including surveillance testing programs in congregate settings and investments in laboratory capacity to process samples.

When all these new sites are operational, the Baker-Polito Administration will have nearly 50 testing sites in the state-run Stop the Spread program, which will be able to conduct 110,000 free tests per week. This program has grown exponentially since it first launched in early July. In September, STS sites tested approximately 28,000 people each week, that number grew to 42,500 in October, and more than 91,400 individuals were tested at STS sites between November 19 and November 25.

Shifting to higher-volume, less expensive sites that serve an entire region will allow the Commonwealth to test more individuals on a weekly basis and reduce per-test costs, making the testing program more sustainable.

AbbotBinaxNOW Tests: ()Additionally, to support increased testing demand for vulnerable populations, the Administration will distribute up to 150,000 AbbotBinaxNOW tests to community health centers and community hospitals to use during December. Ordering information for Community Hospitals and Community Health Centers can be found **here** (/info-details/covid-19-testing-guidance#guidance-for-community-health-centers-and-community-hospitals-).

COVID-19 cases are increasing across the Commonwealth, and the Administration's expanded testing will focus on converting certain sites to high-volume sites so they are able to serve more residents. Over the next month, existing testing sites will engage in winter planning preparations including converting to an appointment-based system to reduce wait times and traffic congestion.

Stop the Spread Operations by City/County: Brockton, Chelsea, Everett, Fall River, Framingham, Great Barrington, Greenfield, Holyoke, Lawrence, Lynn, Marlborough, Methuen, Nantucket, New Bedford, North Adams, Pittsfield, Randolph, Revere, Salem, Saugus, Springfield, Winthrop, Worcester,

Additional New Sites Announced Today: Barnstable County (Community testing in Barnstable County is being supported by $550K in earmarks), Amherst (Free community testing & increased lab capacity is being supported with $5M of ELC funding in Amherst (UMass), Martha's Vineyard (Free community testing in Dukes County is being supported locally)

Visit www.mass.gov/gettested (/gettested) for more information and to find a testing site near you.

In addition to STS sites, Massachusetts residents who are a close contact or who have COVID-19 symptoms can obtain a test, covered by their insurance, at more than **350 testing sites** (https://memamaps.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=eba3f0395451430b9f631cb095febf13) across the Commonwealth, with no co-pay. **Residents can also order ()at-home test kits** (/info-details/covid-19-testing-guidance#testing-options-for-entities-) like Pixel, which are covered by insurance and available for uninsured individuals as well. These tests are easy-to-use, arrive via overnight shipping, and currently have an average turnaround time of 1-2 days according to LabCorp.

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Media Contact

Sarah Finlaw, Press Secretary, Governor's Office

Phone

(617) 725-4025 (tel:6177254025)

Online

gov.press@state.ma.us (mailto:gov.press@state.ma.us)

Office of Governor Charlie Baker and Lt. Governor Karyn Polito

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