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PRESS RELEASE

Baker-Polito Administration Announces Expansion of Targeted Free COVID-19 Testing Sites

Testing will be available through August 14

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

7/27/2020

Office of Governor Charlie Baker and Lt. Governor Karyn Polito

Governor's Press Office

Executive Office of Health and Human Services

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BOSTON — Today, the Baker-Polito Administration announced an expansion of its "Stop the Spread" initiative, which provides free COVID-19 testing in targeted communities across the Commonwealth.

This expansion includes new testing sites in Agawam, Brockton, Methuen, Randolph, Revere, Springfield, Taunton and Worcester. The Administration previously launched free testing sites in Chelsea, Everett, Fall River, Lawrence, Lowell, Lynn, Marlborough and New Bedford, bringing the total number of communities served, with today's expansion, to 16.

The Stop the Spread initiative is a data-driven focused effort to reduce the prevalence of COVID-19 in communities that are above the state average in total cases, positive test rate, and have experienced a decline in testing levels since April. All residents of these 16 communities, including asymptomatic individuals, are urged to use these sites to get tested. While these sites are being launched in these communities, they are open to all residents of the Commonwealth.

The population of the new cities in which the free testing will be conducted – Agawam, Brockton, Methuen, Randolph, Revere, Springfield, Taunton and Worcester – make up approximately 10% of the Commonwealth's population. However, these communities have seen 15% of the Commonwealth's positive tests in the last two weeks.

The statewide positive test rate over the past two weeks is approximately 1.7%, but in these 8 communities, the positivity rate is nearly 50% higher, at 2.3%.

Despite the continued elevated spread in these communities, total testing in these communities has declined over 20% since the end of April, while the statewide average has been flat over that time period. The total cases as a percentage of population for these communities is nearly double the state average.

Since launching Stop the Spread on July 10, 19,083 residents have been tested at these free testing sites. So far, the COVID-19 Command Center has received results back for 17,189 individuals, with a positivity rate just under 1.8%. The Command Center expects these numbers to change as additional testing results continue to come in.

The Administration's first expansion of testing in 8 communities – Chelsea, Everett, Fall River, Lawrence, Lowell, Lynn, Marlborough and New Bedford – has successfully increased testing in those communities.

In the first week, testing in those 8 communities was up 48% over the week before those sites went live, and statewide, testing was up 24%.

Residents of the 16 communities can visit **www.mass.gov/stopthespread** (/info-details/stop-the-spread) to find testing locations, which will be available through August 14.

Residents are reminded that if they test positive for COVID-19, please answer the call when they are contacted by the Community Tracing Collaborative or their local board of health. Also, any individual who needs a safe place to isolate can call (617) 367-5150 to access an isolation and recovery site at no cost.

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Office of Governor Charlie Baker and Lt. Governor Karyn Polito

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Governor Charlie Baker, Lt. Governor Karyn Polito and the Baker-Polito Administration are committed to serving the people of Massachusetts and making the Commonwealth a great place to live, work and raise a family.

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