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PRESS RELEASE

Baker-Polito Administration Announces Increased Community Health Center COVID-19 Testing Capacity, Access to High-Speed Internet

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

4/22/2020

Office of Governor Charlie Baker and Lt. Governor Karyn Polito

Governor's Press Office

Department of Public Health

Executive Office of Health and Human Services

Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development

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BOSTON — The Baker-Polito Administration today announced an initiative to expand COVID-19 testing at Community Health Centers throughout the Commonwealth. The

Administration also announced new WiFi hotspots to provide high-speed internet to unserved municipalities.

Community Health Care Center COVID-19 Testing: In partnership with Quest Diagnostics and the Mass League of Community Health Centers, the Baker-Polito Administration announced further efforts to increase COVID-19 testing through community health centers.

In rolling out increased testing, community health centers in areas of high need that have the ability to increase their testing capacities will be prioritized. Since Friday, Quest has sent over 2,255 kits to community health centers in Boston and Brockton. Quest Diagnostics will ship additional COVID-19 test kits today and tomorrow to 12 community health centers, with a commitment to add additional health centers. By Friday of this week, Quest Diagnostics has committed to ship an additional 5,000 COVID-19 test kits to the 12 community health centers.

Today's announcement provides increased testing capacity for community health facilities located in Boston, Brockton, Lowell, Quincy, Fall River, Provincetown, and Worcester.

WiFi Hotspots: The Baker-Polito Administration announced expanded access to high-speed internet for unserved cities and towns throughout Massachusetts that do not yet have a completed last-mile broadband network. The Massachusetts Broadband Institute (MBI) at MassTech, KCST and local internet service providers will offer communities new WiFi hotspots, building off the Commonwealth's MassBroadband 123 fiber-optic network.

These WiFi hotspots will provide unserved communities with a temporary 250 megabit per second wireless hotspot, allowing increased broadband access for residents, families and students impacted by COVID-19. This program will be offered free of monthly charge to eligible communities until September 1, 2020.

Citizens who use these hotspots must continue to follow social distancing protocols, and the towns and ISPs will post clear signs with the DPH guidance. MassBroadband is providing support to local ISPs as needed, and is tracking these hotspots as they come online and posting them online **here** (http://broadband.masstech.org/wifi).

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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 working to respond to the ongoing COVID-19 outbreak and keep Massachusetts residents safe and healthy.

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