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PRESS RELEASE

Baker-Polito Administration Announces New Funding, Outlines Ongoing Steps To Support Long-Term Care Facilities

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

4/15/2020

Office of Governor Charlie Baker and Lt. Governor Karyn Polito

Governor's Press Office

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BOSTON — The Baker-Polito Administration today outlined ongoing steps to support long-term care facilities, including $130 million in new funding, expanded testing, PPE distribution and more.

Long-Term Care Facility Support: The COVID-19 Response Command Center is working to detect, prevent and manage the outbreaks of COVID-19 throughout the state and is

intensely focused on mitigating the spread of illness in senior living facilities. Statewide, there are 383 nursing homes, 255 assisted living residences, and 93 rest homes in Massachusetts. There are approximately 38,000 residents in nursing homes; 16,500 in assisted living residences; and 3,000 residents in rest homes. Recognizing that these facilities are highly vulnerable to outbreaks of COVID-19, **the Administration in March implemented** (/news/massachusetts-issues-policies-and-procedures-restricting-visitors-to-nursing-homes-and-rest) stringent visitation restrictions and screening guidelines for staff at long-term care facilities.

Today, the Administration outlined ongoing steps and new resources to support these facilities:

$130 Million In New Funding:

In early April, the Administration **announced** (/news/baker-polito-administration-announces-increased-resources-for-health-care-providers-expanded) a 10% MassHealth rate increase (approximately $50 million) across the board for all nursing facilities.

Facilities that create dedicated COVID-19 wings and units and follow necessary safety protocols will be eligible for an additional 15% rate increase, or a net increase of 25% (approximately $50 million). These funds support additional staffing, infection control and supply costs throughout the state of emergency.

An estimated $30 million will support facilities that established dedicated skilled nursing facilities.

Expanded Mobile Testing:

The Commonwealth's Mobile Testing program, a partnership between the Department of Public Health, the National Guard, and the Broad Institute has improved access to testing for nursing home, rest home, and assisted living facilities to test more people. On April 13th, the Administration updated testing guidance to encourage long-term care facilities to conduct widespread testing for residents, even if they have no symptoms, and staff. In

addition to the mobile testing program, facilities can conduct their own on-site testing using kits supplied by the Broad Institute.

- As of April 14, more than 4,500 tests have been collected at 264 facilities.
- As of yesterday, 77 facilities had requested more than 8,600 test kits.

PPE Distribution:

Since the beginning of March, the Command Center has distributed nearly 1.3 million masks, almost 200,000 gowns and over 2 million gloves to long-term care facilities.

Rapid Response Clinical Team & Staff Resources:

The Commonwealth has also mobilized rapid-response clinical teams to provide short-term support for facilities with a high volume of cases or with critical staffing needs. These teams are made up of EMS technicians, nurses, and other health care professionals.

To meet staffing needs, the Administration has:

- Stood up a Long-Term Care Portal to match individuals that have registered through the portal with the staffing requests submitted by facilities;
- Announced a $1,000 signing bonus to all individuals that register through the LTC portal to work for a certain amount of time in a nursing home, and;
- Tapped into the volunteers who've signed up through the **Health Professionals Volunteer** (/health-services-covid-19-volunteer-form) portal

Crisis Management Support:

To provide crisis management support for long-term care facilities, the Administration has also contracted with a firm specializing in nursing home crisis management. They will be available to provide facilities with on-site management and operational support to assist with staffing, vendors, implementing infection control measures, etc. The firm will also support efforts to stand up dedicated COVID-19 facilities and wings/units within existing nursing facilities.

Dedicated COVID-19 Skilled Nursing Facility Capacity Update:

The Administration has pursued three parallel options for expanding COVID-19 dedicated nursing facility capacity:

- Approach 1: Converting existing occupied facilities to fully dedicated COVID-19 facilities. An example of this is the Beaumont Facility in Worcester.
- Approach 2: Converting empty facilities to stand up a new dedicated COVID-19 nursing facility. An example of this is the Pioneer Valley Recovery Center in East Longmeadow.
- Approach 3: Creating dedicated COVID-19 wings within a broader nursing facility.

To date, in addition to the Beaumont facility, the Commonwealth currently has 5 dedicated COVID-19 facilities opening within the next 7-10 days in Brewster, Falmouth, New Bedford, East Longmeadow and Great Barrington; and several others in the planning stages.

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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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