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PRESS RELEASE

Baker-Polito Administration Launches Targeted Free COVID-19 Testing Sites

Testing will be available in eight communities from July 10 to August 14

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

7/08/2020

Office of Governor Charlie Baker and Lt. Governor Karyn Polito

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BOSTON — Today, the Baker-Polito Administration announced the launch of free COVID-19 testing sites in eight communities from July 10 to August 14 to help stop the spread of COVID-19.

This "Stop the Spread" initiative is a data-driven effort to reduce the prevalence of COVID-19 in communities that are above the state average in total cases and positive test rate, and have experienced a decline in testing levels since April. The initiative is being launched in Chelsea, Everett, Fall River, Lawrence, Lowell, Lynn, Marlborough, and New Bedford. Residents of these communities are urged to take advantage of the availability of these new testing sites, even if they are asymptomatic. While these sites are being launched in these communities, they are open to all residents of the Commonwealth.

"While the Commonwealth has made progress on reducing the overall positive test rate, there are still communities where the number of positive tests is above the average of the rest of the state," **said Governor Charlie Baker.** "Focusing our efforts to increase testing in these communities will help identify new cases and stop the spread. Residents of these communities, even those who are asymptomatic, are urged to take advantage of these new sites."

"This initiative will provide widespread testing in easy to access community locations,"**said Lt. Governor Karyn Polito.** "If you live in these communities, please get tested to protect your family, loved ones and neighbors from COVID-19."

"Increased testing within these communities will help to identify new cases of COVID-19 and break the chains of community transmission," **said COVID-19 Command Center Director & Health and Human Services**

Secretary Marylou Sudders. “As we move into the summer, we will continue to closely monitor positivity and testing rates across the Commonwealth.”

The population of the cities in which the free testing will be conducted – Chelsea, Everett, Fall River, Lawrence, Lowell, Lynn, Marlborough, and New Bedford – make up approximately 9% of the Commonwealth’s population, but have seen 27% of the Commonwealth’s positive tests in the last two weeks.

The statewide positive test rate over the past two weeks is approximately 2%, but in these eight communities, 8% of tests have been positive.

Despite the continued elevated spread in these communities, total testing in these communities has declined 39% since the end of April, and the total cases as a percentage of population for these communities is nearly double the state average.

Residents may visit **mass.gov/stopthespread** (/info-details/stop-the-spread) to find testing locations.

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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