

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Department of Public Health
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June 30, 2020

Dear Municipal Officials,

Massachusetts' number of positive COVID-19 cases continues to trend downward. We have been successful in this public health accomplishment so far due to the vigilance of our residents in following the health and safety guidance that the Commonwealth has released and our collective action in planning and preparation.

Since the start of the COVID-19 outbreak, the Department of Public Health (DPH) has collected and reported daily on comprehensive data that ranges from the new number of cases, number of deaths, number of hospitalizations, nursing home cases and the number of individuals who have recovered.

As this data has begun to show decline, the Commonwealth is taking a cautious and measured approach to re-opening our economy by requiring compliance with Governor and Public Health Orders, including Re-opening Standards. This will ensure that we continue to see a decrease in positive cases. Municipal health departments and Boards of Health are doing tremendous work in the communities to help enforce these standards to help keep people safe. Moving too quickly, as we have seen in states like Florida and Arizona, has the potential for a significant increase in the number of positive cases and a burden on the health care system.

As you know, COVID-19 is caused by a novel and highly contagious strain of coronavirus that aggressively spreads by person-to-person transmission. It is most commonly spread via respiratory droplets, especially those produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. As the understanding of COVID-19 infection continues to rapidly evolve, studies now show that talking loudly and singing and other activities involving heightened or increased respiratory activity could cause the spread of the virus. Because of the manner in which COVID-19 spreads within communities, important strategies for containment of the disease are for individuals to wear face coverings and to practice "social distancing" measures (generally defined as not coming within six feet of another person). These measures reduce the risk of transmission of the

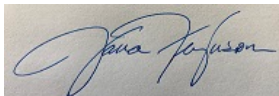
virus causing COVID-19 from person to person and thus reduce the numbers of people who become infected, develop serious illness and die from the illness. Each person who avoids developing COVID-19 also prevents those in contact with him or her from becoming infected, avoiding community transmission.

The Department of Public Health reminds all communities throughout the Commonwealth that festivities and large gatherings, including those on the Fourth of July, which encourage crowds jeopardize the public health. Under the Governor's Revised [Order](#) Regulating Gatherings Throughout the Commonwealth, COVID-19 Order No. 38, gatherings sizes that exceed the allowable number and bring persons into close proximity in any confined indoor or outdoor space remain prohibited. This limitation specifically applies to gathering such as fairs or festivals. At this time hosting events such as parades, fireworks, and town picnics, increases the risk of the transmission of COVID-19, jeopardizes our continued progress in mitigating COVID-19 and puts individuals at risk of becoming infected.

As a reminder, guidance for opening can be found at <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/reopening-massachusetts> and questions or comments can be directed to Department of Labor Standards (DLS) through their hotline: (508) 616-0461 x 9488 or by sending an email to safepublicworkplacemailbox@mass.gov.

Thank you for your collaboration as we all work to protect the residents of the Commonwealth.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Jana Ferguson", on a light-colored rectangular background.

Jana Ferguson
Assistant Commissioner