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PUBLIC HEALTH WEEKLY UPDATE:
COVID-19
April 24, 2020

Below is a summary related to the Town of Belmont's response to the COVID-19 (Coronavirus) pandemic. The Town of Belmont is committed to providing information including this weekly update on the COVID-19 situation. Numbers related to COVID-19 and other pertinent information are updated daily on the [Town's website](#).

The Town of Belmont currently has **156** confirmed cases of COVID-19. There are now a total of **51** COVID-19 related deaths in the Town of Belmont, **41** of which are confirmed by filed death certificates with the Town Clerk's Office and **10** are *unconfirmed*. The Town of Belmont continues to send its condolences to the families that have lost loved ones due to COVID-19.

Daily updates on COVID-19 and local cases will continue to be posted on the Town of Belmont's [COVID-19 webpage](#).

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) is providing weekly reports of COVID-19 data by city or town as part of its [Dashboard for COVID-19 Cases, Quarantine and Monitoring](#). MDPH will update this list once a week on Wednesdays.

Contact Tracing

To help reduce the spread of the virus, Belmont will participate in the [Massachusetts COVID-19 Community Tracing Collaborative \(CTC\)](#) program.

What is contact tracing?

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts is collaborating with Partners in Health (PIH) to contact every resident that tests positive for COVID-19. Public health officials from PIH and/or the local board of health will speak with infected individuals and help identify a list of **close contacts*** that they may have had an interaction with in the 48-hour period before their start of symptoms, or the two days prior to the test that led to a positive result for individuals who do not have symptoms.

Once close contacts are identified, public health officials will begin reaching out to individuals on the list of contacts to notify them about the exposure to an infected individual (who will not be identified) and to also provide them with direction about a 14-day quarantine period and instruction on self-



monitoring for symptoms. Contact tracers or local board of health officials then will check in with individuals to monitor symptoms and needs throughout the duration of the quarantine period.

If an individual develops symptoms consistent with COVID-19 while in quarantine, they will need to notify public health staff, and remain in isolation until symptoms resolve. Contact tracing will then begin on behalf of this individual as well.

Why is contact tracing important?

People in close contact with someone infected with a virus such as COVID-19 are at higher risk for becoming infected themselves and of potentially infecting others. Contact tracing finds possible new cases quickly so that they can be isolated to help stop further spread of the virus.

*MDPH defines a **close contact** as someone that has being within approximately 6-feet of a known COVID-19 case for about 15 minutes.

Belmont Helps: Ways to Help Our Community

[Donate](#) | [Volunteer](#) | [Ask for Help](#) | [Find Resources](#) | [Request or Help Sew Masks](#)

Belmont Helps, a Winn Brook Parent Teacher Association Committee, is a 100% volunteer organization founded on March 14, 2020 to connect Belmont area community members in need during the COVID-19 outbreak to resources and volunteers. More information can be found at www.belmonthelps.org. Contact belmonthelps@gmail.com or leave a message at (617) 993-0162 for a call back from a team member.

Emotional Health Resources

During stressful times it is common to have worries about yourself or a loved one. If you have questions about the types of treatment available, please email Health Department Social Worker Janet Amdur at jamdur@belmont-ma.gov.

Please remember to take care of your emotional health and help others to do the same. If you need emotional help please also consider making use of the following resources:

- Call 2-1-1 and choose the “**CALL2TALK**” option. (Please note that 2-1-1 call center has recently been operating on approximately a 90-minute delay for responses.)
- The **Samaritans** helpline operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Call or text their helpline any time at 1-877-870-4673.
- The **Disaster Distress Helpline**, 1-800-985-5990, is a national hotline, which also operates 24/7, to provide immediate crisis counseling for people who are experiencing emotional distress related to any natural or human caused disaster, including disease outbreaks like COVID-19. This toll-free, multilingual, and confidential crisis support service is available to all residents in the United States and its territories.
- The [Beech Street Center](#) is a local resource in Belmont that can help senior citizens address a variety of needs and access to social services.

Testing

If you have symptoms, and you believe that you should be tested for COVID-19, first contact your healthcare provider. They will decide whether you need to be tested, but keep in mind that there



is no specific treatment for COVID-19 and people who are mildly ill may be able to isolate and care for themselves at home.

If your health care provider recommends that you should be tested, but their facility cannot offer the test, obtain a referral and contact one of the facilities on the Massachusetts Department of Public Health list of COVID-19 Testing Sites in Massachusetts found here: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/ma-covid-19-testing-sites/download>.

Keep in mind that you may need to undergo an additional eligibility screening before you can be tested, and that these sites require an appointment, they do not yet take walk-ins.

Face Coverings: *Help stop the spread!*

The US Centers for Disease Control (CDC) is recommending that individuals wear cloth face coverings when in public settings (i.e. grocery stores, pharmacies, etc.) where it may be difficult to safely engage in social distancing practices. This recommendation from the CDC is due increased evidence of asymptomatic (no active symptoms) spread of COVID-19.

To help prevent the spread of COVID-19, it is important that all Belmont residents begin engaging in this practice when in public settings where they may encounter individuals with unknown health statuses. It is equally important to continue engaging in social distancing practices and to remain at least 6-feet away from others when in public.

Please visit the CDC's website to learn more about its [recommendation for face coverings](#). The CDC has also posted information on [how to make your own face covering](#).

Grocery stores

On 4/7, the Department of Public Health released further guidance to promote social distancing at grocery stores. The new guidance requires that each grocery store limit occupancy to 40% of its maximum permitted occupancy level. It also sets out procedures by which staff should monitor occupancy levels. You can find the new guidance here: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/order-grocery-stores-40-percent/download>

Things to keep in mind when you go to the grocery store:

- Follow guidance posted in store and instructions from grocery store staff on social distancing
- Only send one person per family, leave children and other families members at home if at all possible
- Buy enough to extend how long you can go until your next trip, but don't buy up too many of one particular item
- Shop at an off-peak time if possible. In the morning before 10 or 11 am tends to be the busiest time in many area stores at the moment
- Wear a face covering

Remember that it is possible that you may be contagious even if you don't feel sick. Your fellow shoppers and hardworking grocery store employees are depending on you to make the best possible choices to keep them safe.

Medical Reserve Corps: *A Call for Volunteers*

The Medical Reserve Corps (MRC), is a national network of volunteers under the US Department of Health and Human Services. The [Metro East MRC](#) is the regional unit based out of the Arlington



Health Department that is charged with serving 18 communities, including Belmont. There is currently a high demand for Metro East MRC volunteers to help with the local and regional response to the COVID-19 crisis. Volunteers have been activated to assist with delivering food and medications, staffing call centers, and providing backflow to medical facilities in the region. Interested volunteers should sign up at www.MAResponds.org by selecting "Metro East MRC" as their organization. Medical volunteers are also encouraged to join the "COVID-19 Response" team via MA Responds. Please contact **Mia Nardini**, Metro East MRC Coordinator, at 781-316-3177 or MetroEastMRC@Town.Arlington.MA.US with any questions.

Belmont COVID-19 Informational Call Center and Email

For general COVID-19 questions not specific to the Town of Belmont, all Massachusetts residents encouraged to call the state's 2-1-1 hotline that is staffed by operators 24/7 and with translators available in multiple languages. Residents with questions can dial 2-1-1 from any landline or cellphone or use the live chat option on the [Mass 2-1-1 website](#).

The Town of Belmont has also established a call center to allow residents to ask non-medical questions specific to COVID-19 in Belmont. The call center will be staffed Monday through Friday from 8am to 4pm the number for the call center is (617) 993-2222. Questions can also be emailed to: belmontec@belmont-ma.gov.

Please call 9-1-1 in the event of an emergency. Calls should not be made to 9-1-1 to obtain information about COVID-19

Belmont Public Schools

The Superintendent of will post regular updates for parents and students in the [Belmont Public Schools News](#) section of its webpage.

What's open and what's closed

Statewide:

- All **public and private elementary and secondary schools** throughout the Commonwealth will be closed for the remainder of this school year with distancing learning continuing through the last day of school in June.
- Effective March 23rd, all **public and private daycare providers** will be closed. The Commonwealth will establish Exempt Emergency Child Care Programs to provide priority service for families of emergency personnel, medical staff, and others critical to confronting COVID-19.
- All **restaurants and bars** are prohibited from on-premise consumption of food. However, these food establishments may remain open for now to provide food through take-out or delivery service.
- To learn more about what types of businesses are allowed to continue operations during this time, please refer to the Commonwealth's [COVID-19 Essential Services FAQs](#).

Belmont:

- All Town of Belmont **public playgrounds and fields** (including all basketball, tennis, and pickleball courts) are closed.
- **Field use** permits are suspended until the public playgrounds and fields are reopened.



- **Public meetings and hearings** will be limited to those that are considered necessary for the purposes of maintaining essential Town of Belmont government functions and that are mandated under federal, state, or local law/regulation.
- **Town Hall Offices, the Belmont Public Library, and the Beech Street Center** are closed to the public until further notice. Residents in need of assistance are encouraged to contact respective Town departments by phone and/or email www.belmont-ma.gov .
- Important updates about COVID-19 and its impact on the Town will be posted at www.belmont-ma.gov .