

December 9, 2021



Empowering  
Independence

CENTER FOR LIVING & WORKING, INC.  
**WHAT'S UP?**



Deaf and Hard of Hearing Independent Living Services

## COVID-19 Updates

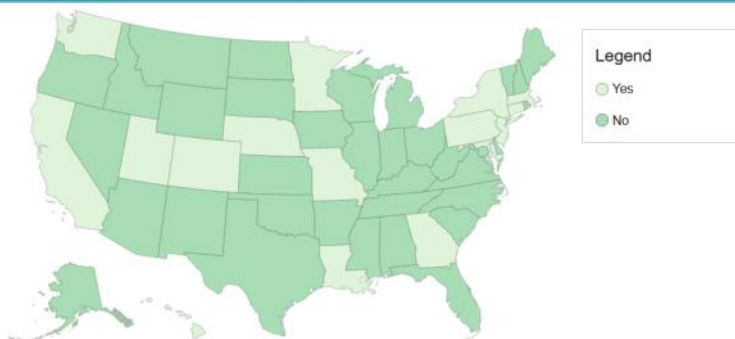
### New COVID-19 Omicron Variant

- End of November — 1st reported to WHO (World Health Organization).
- December 1, 2021 — 1st case in the U.S. reported.
- Don't know yet:
  - ✓ Will Omicron spread easily and fast like the Delta variant?
  - ✓ Will people get really sick from Omicron?
  - ✓ Will vaccines and medications work against Omicron?



**DELTA is still the main variant in the United States.**

US COVID-19 Cases Caused by the Omicron Variant



US COVID-19 CASES CAUSED BY OMNICRON VARIANT

### Omicron: What you Need to Know

Omicron will probably:

- Spread more/faster than the *original* COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-2) virus.
  - **Don't know** if Omicron or Delta spread more/faster.
- Spread by people (with symptoms or NOT; fully vaccinated or NOT).

Vaccines *should* help protect against severe illness, hospitalizations, and deaths from Omicron.

**MASKS PROTECT AGAINST ALL VARIANTS!**



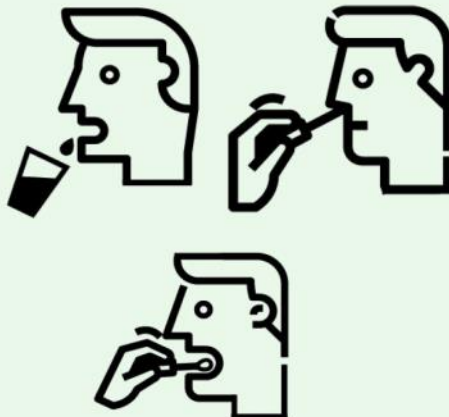

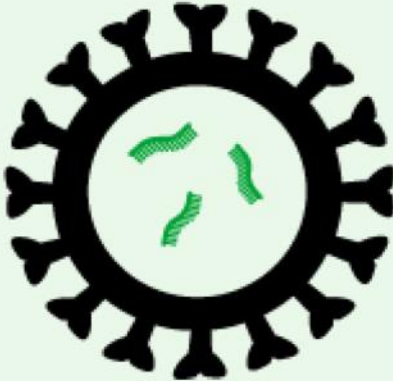
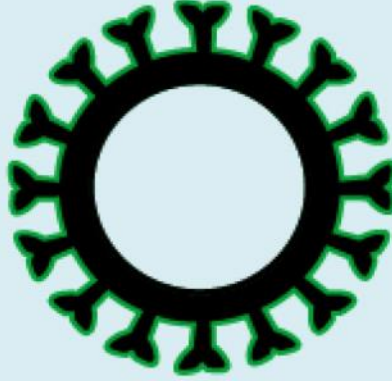
More information here:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/variants/omicron-variant.html>

## COVID-19 Updates (continued)

### Tests can tell you if you currently have COVID-19

- Viral tests look for current COVID-19 infection

VIRAL TESTS		
Looks for current infection		
	NUCLEIC ACID AMPLIFICATION TEST (NAAT)	ANTIGEN TEST
HOW THE TEST IS DONE	 <p>Saliva, or swab from nose or throat</p>	 <p>Saliva, or swab from nose or throat</p>
HOW THE TEST WORKS	 <p>Detects genetic material (RNA) within the COVID-19 virus</p>	 <p>Detects proteins (or antigens) on the surface of the COVID-19 virus</p>
RESULTS	Same day and up to 3 days. Some are rapid (around 20 minutes)	Most are rapid, around 15 minutes or less.

# COVID-19 Vaccine Sites — Worcester

## BOOSTER OR 1ST COVID-19 VACCINES

**Worcester Public Library**

**Walk-in**



The City of  
**WORCESTER**

**Wednesdays 11:00 AM - 7:00 PM and Saturdays 11:00 AM - 5:00 PM**

- Wednesday, December 8
- Saturday, December 11
- Wednesday, December 15
- Saturday, December 18
- Wednesday, December 22
- Wednesday, December 29



## Other walk up clinics

- **AIDS Project Worcester** 165 Southbridge Street  
Fridays 1:00 - 4:00 PM
- **Edward M. Kennedy Community Health Center** 19 Tacoma Street:  
Monday - Friday 8:00 AM - 1:00 PM
- **Family Health Center** 26 Queen Street  
Tuesday - Saturday at various times; call 508-860-7700 for more info.
- **UMMHC Mercantile Center** Front Street:  
Mondays 11:00 AM - 4:00 PM; Tuesdays 10:00 AM - 3:00 PM; Thursdays 10:00 AM - 3:00 PM



## Updated *Therapists for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Directory*

Click here: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1mRNQIKYYNjM4vYpRX7OECQkiW-PQlu62/view?usp=sharing>



## COVID-19 Updates (continued)



Governor Baker and Lt. Governor Polito:  
COVID-19 Booster Shots 12/3/2021

### Booster Shots

Everyone **age 18+** who lives, works, or studies in Massachusetts and received **Pfizer** or **Moderna** **at least 6 months ago**, or **Johnson & Johnson** **at least 2 months ago**, **should** get a booster.

- People ages 5-17 can get the Pfizer vaccine.
- People age 18+ can get *any* vaccine.

Find a Booster or Vaccine: <https://vaxfinder.mass.gov/>

Governor's Updates: <https://www.mass.gov/governor-updates>

### Deaf Health Talks | Pediatric Health: COVID & Children

A discussion and Q&A in American Sign Language, hosted by the *MDisability Program*, at the **University of Michigan Department of Family Medicine**, in partnership with **Partners in Deaf Health** and **Michigan Deaf Health**.

Click here for video:

<https://www.facebook.com/UMFamilyMed/videos/327401808720931>



### Travel

Thinking about traveling for a holiday or event? Check the CDC's (Center for Disease Control) *Travel* page to help decide what's best for you and your family. **Wait to travel AFTER you are fully vaccinated.**

**MASK UP  
IT'S REQUIRED**



**Everyone on board must wear a mask.**

Masks are required on **planes, buses, trains,** and other forms of public transportation in the United States. This includes when you are traveling into and out of the U.S.

Masks are also required anytime you are inside a U.S. **transportation hub,** such as an airport, train station, or bus station.



[cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://cdc.gov/coronavirus)

**Check your destination's COVID-19 situation first!**  
There may be restrictions.

**You must wear a mask over your nose and mouth in:**

- Indoor public transportation areas (including airplanes)
- Indoor U.S. transportation hubs (including airports)

**Not fully vaccinated and must travel?**

- **Get tested before AND after your trip.**

**DON'T TRAVEL IF YOU:**

- **WERE EXPOSED TO COVID-19**
- **ARE SICK, OR**
- **TEST POSITIVE FOR COVID-19!**

Click [here](#) to go to the CDC's Travel page.



# Changes to **Emergency Broadband Benefit (EBB)**

The **Affordable Connectivity Program** will replace the **Emergency Broadband Benefit Program**.

## What's Changing?



- New maximum monthly benefit will be \$30/month (\$50/month before)
  - **Is your household on qualifying Tribal lands?**  
Your monthly benefit will stay at \$75/month.
- **New ways to Qualify:**
  - Have income **at or below** 200% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines **OR**
  - WIC benefits
- You will need to **re-qualify** for the *Affordable Connectivity Program*, **IF** you qualified for EBB:
  - because of lost income due to job loss/furlough since February 29, 2020 **OR**
  - by meeting eligibility guidelines for a participating provider's COVID-19 program.

*More information about what you need to do will be coming soon.*

## Enrolled in the **EBB Program** as of 12/31/2021?

- You will still get your current monthly benefit **during the 60-day transition period.**

View more information here: <https://www.fcc.gov/broadbandbenefit>



Watch the **EBB Program** ASL VLOG here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ERrCGJlsFzw>

## APPLY NOW FOR EBB:

- 1) Online at [GetEmergencyBroadband.org](https://getemergencybroadband.org) (OR print, fill-out and mail a mail-in application) **AND**
- 2) Call your preferred participating provider— pick a plan and get your discount applied to your bill.

Find providers at:

<https://data.usac.org/publicreports/CompaniesNearMe/Download/Report>

Links to mail-in applications:

English: [https://getemergencybroadband.org/res/documents/EBB\\_Application\\_Form\\_FINAL.pdf](https://getemergencybroadband.org/res/documents/EBB_Application_Form_FINAL.pdf)

Spanish: [https://getemergencybroadband.org/res/documents/EBB\\_Application\\_Form\\_FINAL\\_SPANISH.pdf](https://getemergencybroadband.org/res/documents/EBB_Application_Form_FINAL_SPANISH.pdf)



## Worcester Community Coalition



New Facebook page!

<https://www.facebook.com/WorcesterCommunityConnectionsCoalition>

# Improved Access to Suicide Prevention Lifeline

## FCC APPROVES TEXT-TO-988 TO EXPAND ACCESS TO THE SUICIDE PREVENTION LIFELINE

The Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) voted to require the added option for text messaging to the **new 988 National Suicide Prevention Hotline**.



### Why is this good news?

- Direct communication for millions of Americans (including Deaf, DeafBlind, Hard of Hearing, and speech-disabled)
- More confidential/anonymous than VRS or other calling services.

**July 16, 2022: People can call 9-8-8 OR text 9-8-8 (instead of calling 1-800-273-8255). Text providers must support text messaging by the July 16, 2022 deadline.**

National Association of the Deaf (NAD), and 20 other organizations including RID, advocated that text messaging - and other communication options including Direct Video Communications (DVC) - should be a required option for people who use ASL as their primary language. Even though the FCC did not take action on DVC advocacy, efforts will continue and hopefully it will be included in the future.

If you or anyone you know may be experiencing thoughts of suicide:

- CALL: 1-800-273-8255 (1-800-273-TALK)
- CHAT: <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/chat/>

Read more about the FCC's decision here:

<https://ecfsapi.fcc.gov/file/111883421552/DOC-377987A1.pdf>

## Are you a Consumer or PCA in the MassHealth PCA Program?

Your Fiscal Intermediary (FI) will be changing to Tempus Unlimited beginning on January 1, 2022.

If you do not already use Tempus Unlimited as your FI, here's what you need to do:

1.

### Check your mail and email, or go online

- You should have already received a letter and/or email from Tempus Unlimited that includes pre-filled forms for you to complete.
- Can't find a letter or forms? Contact Tempus at 877-479-7577 or MAFMS@tempusunlimited.org, or visit Tempus' website at <https://tempusunlimited.org/ma-transition/> to download blank forms.

2.

### Fill out your forms and return them to Tempus FI

- Complete each required form
- Send back to Tempus as soon as possible – **NO LATER than December 17, 2021**
- You can send your completed forms to Tempus via email, fax, or mail:
  - Email: MAFMS@tempusunlimited.org
  - Fax: (800) 359-2884
  - Mail: 600 Technology Center Dr., Stoughton, MA 02072

Have questions? Go to <https://tempusunlimited.org/ma-transition/> or Contact Tempus at 877-479-7577 or MAFMS@tempusunlimited.org

Learn more here: <https://tempusunlimited.org/ma-transition/>

# 10 Tips for Managing Hearing Loss During the Holidays



When you have hearing loss, holidays can be hard to manage, much less the chaos the season and its festivities can bring. Even smaller family gatherings can increase noise levels, making it hard to hear.

**Don't miss out on conversation or feel bad for asking people to repeat themselves;** be open and honest about your needs and include your family and friends in your hearing loss journey.



See the tips here: <https://captioncall.com/hearing-loss/10-tips-for-managing-hearing-loss-during-the-holidays#msdyntrid=nczXPRSG3IFiNsP3pYSe7U1XqfqFtA1SxPO6ey-Aml0>

## New MCDHH VLOGs



### MCDHH Deaf Art

MCDHH is pleased to share a Deaf Art video, highlighting accessible arts and culture events and activities of interest to the community.

WATCH the VLOG here: <https://fb.watch/9JYdZitvaH/>

### MCDHH SUD and Recovery Services: Holidays, Addiction, and Alcohol

MCDHH is sharing an important message from Karran Larson, Coordinator of Statewide SUD & Recovery Services.

WATCH the VLOG here: <https://fb.watch/9NZmA9NKyc/>



Transcript: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1h5OMmxReCa1AERQu5ReoEbZ8vWbzM5cV9X-tgarcbVM/edit?usp=sharing>

## Worcester Parent/Caregiver Guide to Community Resources — Now online!

The Worcester Community Connections Coalition Resource Guides are available online!

**Last updated in May 2021. Please send any program changes/additions to [abureau@sevenhills.org](mailto:abureau@sevenhills.org) for future updates.**

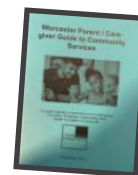
ENGLISH: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1rrPOWcD4HgLkAOULzdxACFU3hfULGdrB/view>

SPANISH: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1pgKn-O1YStYD7AtvYkj03TFxZpI-GTBe/view>

**Printed guides are still available!**

**Get a printed guide (Monday—Friday, 8:30-4:30) at:**

Worcester Family Resource Center  
484 Main Street, Suite 460, Worcester, MA 01608



## Autism Resources in Central MA

Go to: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/15w1TXfixzoOiGW7JY86isn7McNm4EGLs/view>



## Support Deaf-Owned Businesses

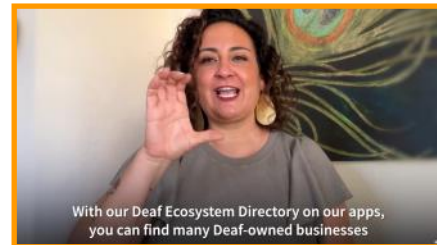
### CONVO Deaf Ecosystem Directory

Need holiday gift ideas?

Get direct access to many Deaf-owned businesses with the *Deaf Ecosystem Directory* on the CONVO app! #ShopDeaf this season!

Watch the VLOG here: <https://bit.ly/3oKt8wz>

Download the CONVO apps at: [convorelay.com/download](http://convorelay.com/download)



### Communication Service for the Deaf

View the list [here](#).



## One Care Update

*UnitedHealthcare Connected* has joined *One Care*.

You can enroll ***IF*** you:

- Are eligible for *OneCare*
- Live in 1 of these counties: Bristol, some parts of Essex, Franklin, Hampden, Hampshire, Middlesex, Plymouth, Suffolk, or Worcester.

**One Care**  
MassHealth+Medicare  
Bringing your care together



Coverage will start: **January 1, 2022**

## Have a Phone with 3G Service?

3G Service will end in 2022. Older phones and devices will lose call/data functions — **including calling 9-1-1!**

- AT&T will stop 3G service in February 2022.
- T-Mobile Sprint stop 3G service on March 31, 2022.
- Verizon will stop 3G service by the end of 2022.

Free guide:

[https://www.fcc.gov/sites/default/files/plan\\_ahead\\_for\\_3g\\_shutoff\\_consumer\\_guide.pdf](https://www.fcc.gov/sites/default/files/plan_ahead_for_3g_shutoff_consumer_guide.pdf)



**WILL NEED  
TO UPDATE  
TO 4G OR 5G!**



## MISSED A *WHAT'S UP* NEWSLETTER?

***Past issues of newsletters are on our website!***

VISIT: [HTTPS://WWW.CENTERLW.ORG/SERVICES/DEAF-HARD-OF-HEARING/](https://www.centerlw.org/services/deaf-hard-of-hearing/)



# COVID-19 Resources/Data

*We will add more sites as needed.*

Vaccine Information	<a href="https://www.mass.gov/covid-19-vaccine">https://www.mass.gov/covid-19-vaccine</a>
Vaccine Appointments	<a href="https://vaxfinder.mass.gov/">https://vaxfinder.mass.gov/</a>
COVID-19 Testing	<a href="http://www.mass.gov/covid-19-testing">www.mass.gov/covid-19-testing</a>
US COVID-19 Cases and Deaths by State	<a href="https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#cases_casesper100klast7days">https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#cases_casesper100klast7days</a>
MA Travel Order	<a href="https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-travel-order">https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-travel-order</a>
MA Response Reporting	<a href="https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-response-reporting">https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-response-reporting</a>
Governor's Press Office	<a href="https://www.mass.gov/orgs/governors-press-office">https://www.mass.gov/orgs/governors-press-office</a>

**NOTE:** Contact your Skills Trainer with questions. See *SE Resources* page for more information.

## Questions about this Newsletter?

Need a website address from your printed newsletter? Contact your Skills Trainer!

Joan Philip	DHILS Director	508-762-1165 (VP)
Denise Paro	Administrative Assistant	508-556-1600 (VP)
Ellen Perkins	DHILS Asst. Manager/Hard of Hearing Skills Trainer	508-502-7576 (Voice); 508-762-1354 (VP)
Catherine Brown	Deaf Skills Trainer (Part-time)	508-762-1021 (VP)
Rosemary Moreira	Deaf Skills Trainer (Full-time)	508-762-1166 (VP)
Kim White	Staff Interpreter	508-755-1042 (Voice); 508-283-1036 (VP)
VACANT	Deaf Skills Trainer (Full-time)	

## Contact Us!

Center for Living & Working, Inc.

*Deaf and Hard of Hearing Independent Living Services Department*

Videophone: 508-762-1164

Voice/TTY: 508-755-1003

[www.CenterLW.org](http://www.CenterLW.org)




*Deaf and Hard of Hearing Independent Living Services*



CLW: <https://www.facebook.com/CenterForLivingAndWorking>

DHILS Group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/469192334303776>



05 05S5

**DOCUMENTING EXPERIENCES OF ASL COMMUNITIES IN THE TIME OF COVID-19**


**WANTED:** Members of the ASL communities (Deaf, CODA, hearing, etc., + any level of fluency in ASL)

**FOR:** a filmed project on your experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic and are willing to share their experiences online

**WHAT YOU WILL DO:**  
Participate in different activities with other ASL users (a group chat, one-on-one interview, and story exercise)

**INTERESTED? GET MORE INFORMATION & SIGN UP HERE (OR USE QR CODE):**  
<https://forms.gle/v3MGZSPFYGibzL8FA>

**\$ YOU WILL BE COMPENSATED \$**  
**\$10 EACH HALF HOUR UP TO 2 HOURS TOTAL.**



**THIS PROJECT HAS BEEN REVIEWED BY THE GALLAUDET IRB**  
If you have any questions, please feel free to contact [julie.hochgesang@gallaudet.edu](mailto:julie.hochgesang@gallaudet.edu).

Watch an introduction VLOG and find out how to submit your video [here](#).