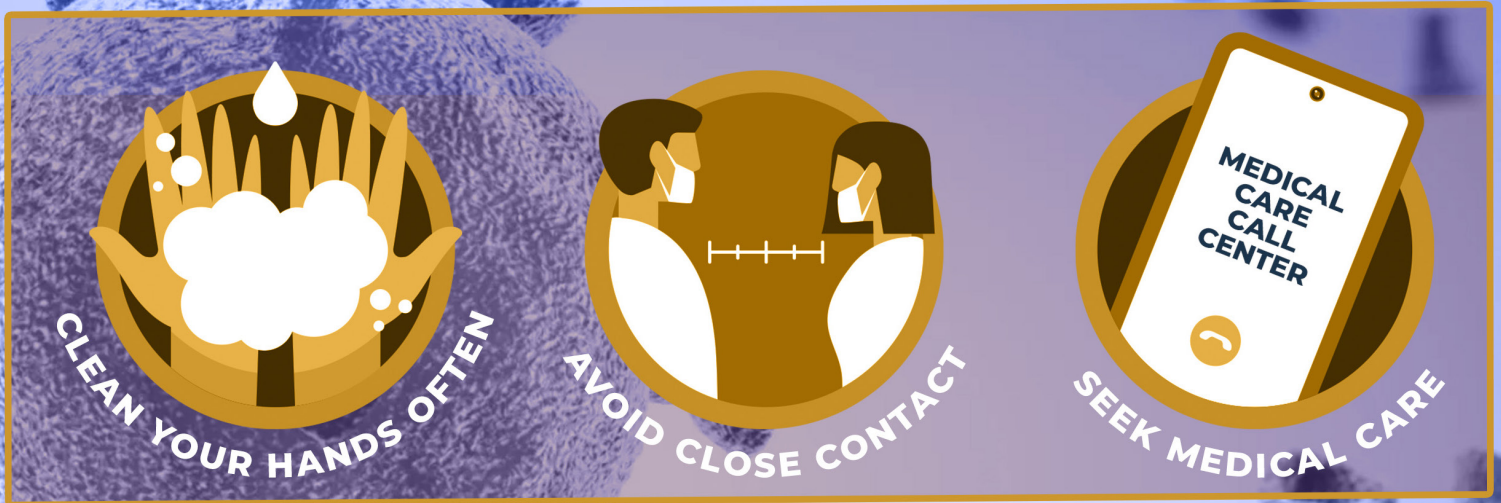




# COMMON GROUND

APRIL 2020 ISSUE



# SCSD Combats COVID-19

# #WEARESCSD

# An Open Letter To The Men And Women Of SCSD



This is an open letter to the men and women who suit up every day and walk through the doors of our facilities at the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department, ready to take on whatever challenges await them behind the walls, predictable and unplanned, doing whatever it is that is asked of them.

Each day, as you enter the lobbies of the Suffolk County House of Correction and the Suffolk County Jail, passing through the Sally ports on the way to your assignments inside, you carry with you the cares and concerns of your families and friends, who may not understand all that you endure, but know enough to hope that you come home safe each day.

As I have often said, the job of the corrections professional is one that is difficult, dangerous and without many accolades. In most instances, the only public attention that you receive for your efforts comes on the comparatively-rare occasion that something goes wrong, and infrequently, if ever, on any one of the countless times that you've risen above and gone beyond to ensure that things continue to go right.

But, now, more than ever, as we collectively face down the global pandemic of COVID-19, amidst constant reminders that we are working through uncertain, unprecedented times, your commitment to maintaining the safety, security and health of those who work and live in our facilities is deeply admired, fully appreciated and greatly necessary.

As you continue to answer the call alongside your equally dedicated and selfless brothers and sisters, please know that I and the other members of the Department's Executive Team are tremendously proud of the efforts and bravery of both our non-custody staff, who are working hard to keep our institutions running in efficient and healthy fashion, and also of those who give unwavering service to the oath that they swore to uphold when they joined the ranks of this noble profession.

In your service, rest assured in the knowledge that we have and will continue to implement best practices to keep you protected, while we do everything in our collective power to return you home to your loved ones, safe and sound.

From the bottom of my heart, I thank you,

**Sheriff Steven W. Tompkins**

## COMMON GROUND NEWSLETTER

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# A COMPREHENSIVE RESOURCE GUIDE FOR SUFFOLK COUNTY RESIDENTS

The document below contains a wealth of important contacts for readers about a multitude of resources that are available to help us navigate through the COVID-19 pandemic. This resource guide covers everything from COVID-19 safety; where to get mental health, addiction and medical services; employment information; immigration assistance; food; domestic violence help; insurance; homeless shelter information; criminal justice; and much more. You can download the full guide by clicking the following link: <http://www.scsdma.org/covid19guide>

I want to give very special thanks to Suffolk County District Attorney Rachael Rollins and the members of her Juvenile Alternative Resolution Program, who compiled this comprehensive and timely information, and made it available for us to share.

March 2020

## Suffolk County District Attorney RACHAEL ROLLINS



### COVID-19 Resource Guide

#### About This Guide

This is a collection of resources currently available in Suffolk County, Ma, compiled by the staff of the Juvenile Alternative Resolution Program of the Juvenile Unit at the Office of Suffolk County District Attorney Rachael Rollins. It is not a complete list, and you should continue to consult relevant experts and your care providers when appropriate. This guide is intended to be a starting point for residents and service providers for finding resources to assist during the COVID-19 National Emergency. Our current circumstances are fluid and evolving; information, services, and recommendations may change over time. We advise you to contact any of the included services outlined here ahead of time to ensure up-to-date accuracy.

#### COVID-19: The Basics

**What is COVID-19?** It is a newly identified virus that causes respiratory illness. It can be transmitted from person to person, which is why hand-washing and avoiding unnecessary contact with other people is so important to stop the spread.

**What are the symptoms?** The most common presentation of the virus is a mild to severe respiratory illness, including fever, cough, and shortness of breath.

**How can I prevent myself from getting sick?** Follow city and state protocols regarding social distancing (staying at home as much as possible and staying at least 6 feet away from others). Avoid close contact with people who are sick, practice good hand washing, and avoid touching your face with unwashed hands. Clean and disinfect commonly touched surfaces regularly and cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or elbow when you cough or sneeze. Contact your primary care physician to seek medical guidance if you develop respiratory illness symptoms, and call 911 for medical emergencies.

**Where can I get more information?** The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health release daily updates on their websites:

<https://www.mass.gov/resource/information-on-the-outbreak-of-coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

**For Comprehensive Information about COVID-19 in 57 Different Languages:**

[https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1KmaFpW-NFokv8\\_D0JrNKpUsNb15MFkSk](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1KmaFpW-NFokv8_D0JrNKpUsNb15MFkSk)

#### Table of Contents

Courts, Police, Fire	2-3
City Resources	3
Healthcare	4-5
Healthcare for the Homeless	5
Health Insurance	6-7
Healthcare Advocacy	7
Mental Health	8-11
Substance Use Disorders Services	11-13
Domestic Violence	14
Child Welfare	15-16
Food	16-20
Food for Students and Children	19-20
Education	21-23
Childcare	23
Housing	24-26
Rent and Utilities	27
Finances and Employment	28-31
Immigration	31-32
Medically Vulnerable Populations	32-33
Mutual Aid	34
Activities at Home	35

**If this guide does not have the information you need:** Call Mass 2-1-1 for assistance navigating resources and social services or visit <https://mass211.org/>



# SHERIFF TOMPKINS, MASSACHUSETTS SHERIFFS OUTLINE STEPS TAKEN TO KEEP OUR JUSTICE-INVOLVED POPULATIONS SAFE DURING COVID-19

The Massachusetts Sheriffs are committed to serving the communities they are sworn to protect. This responsibility includes the health and well-being of their justice-involved populations and the dedicated men and women on their teams of corrections professionals. Every sheriff sees it as their duty to ensure that the public safety and public health needs of all who live and work within their facilities are fully met. That responsibility only grows during global emergencies, and the sheriffs are meeting the COVID-19 pandemic head-on.

Although the authority to release a detainee lies with the courts and the respective District Attorney's Office, the sheriffs are committed to working with the judiciary as well as Law Enforcement partners to identify appropriate persons eligible for release. The priority of Sheriffs is always to have a re-entry release plan that helps individuals transition back into the community. A lack of community support services, particularly during a public health crisis, could set individuals and the communities up for failure.

"Clearly, we will work in concert with the courts and abide by any decision to release those in our care and custody, should they make that determination," said Sheriff Tompkins. "But, one thing that should be of paramount importance to any such consideration is a careful assessment of whether those people targeted for release will be safer out in the streets than in our facilities."

"It is critically important that they have access to the necessary health care, mental health and addiction recovery services, which we are fully equipped to deliver, and a safe, secure place to stay, because without those crucial things, the likelihood of contracting COVID-19 increases, along with the potential spread of infection to others in their radius."

The Massachusetts Sheriffs and their staff are working tirelessly to safely manage their staff and inmate populations and to curb the spread of COVID-19 to their county jails and houses of correction. They provide an exceptional level of care in their facilities, and are prepared for public health scenarios such as this. The sheriffs have implemented proactive and strategic steps to limit the transmission of COVID-19 including:

- Providing in-service training on infectious diseases and emergency preparedness for staff before, during and after this crisis.
- Deploying enhanced intake screening protocols to evaluate new arrivals for symptoms of COVID-19 and limit potential transmission.
- Providing a high level of medical care for all individuals while employing specific protocols when potential or confirmed cases of COVID-19 arise.
- Engagement with medical experts from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) and the National Commission on Correctional Health Care (NCCHC) to ensure that their medical practices are maximally effective and responsive to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Encouraging staff and their justice-involved populations to follow the CDC-recommended practices regarding handwashing, social distancing, continuous sanitizing of facilities and general transmission prevention. Signage has increased throughout the facilities to serve as a reminder of these practices.
- Enhancing screening of staff entering the facility.
- Temporarily suspending in-person visits for families and friends while enhancing alternative means of communication. This includes a range of options such as additional phone calls, mail services or, where available, increased access to text messaging and video conferencing.
- Working with the courts, enhancing videoconferencing and teleconferencing technology to ensure that an inmate's access to the court is continued.

In addition to strategic efforts the Sheriffs have implemented to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in their facilities, the Sheriffs are working proactively with other law enforcement agencies and community advocates to review the individualized cases of those in their custody to ensure appropriate care and release information is provided.

It is crucial to each sheriff that every individual leaves their custody with an individualized and specialized care plan. Releasing individuals without that level of preparation would be a dereliction of the sheriff's duty – and would not set up the justice-involved individual or their communities for a successful reentry.

During this uncertain and unsettling time, we understand many are concerned about the safety and protection of the justice-involved populations. As an association, we share this same concern. No one, however, is more concerned with the health and well-being of those in their care than our Sheriffs. The safety, health and wellbeing of the staff and inmates are always at the forefront of the sheriffs' minds in their daily decisionmaking. Our sheriffs are continuously meeting and evaluating their protocols relating to COVID-19 to ensure the safety and welfare to those they serve. Should the sheriffs see change in the status of the safety of their institutions they will not hesitate to make any decision or take any measure necessary to keep their population healthy and safe.



# INFECTIOUS DISEASES, COVID-19, AND CORRECTIONS

## SUFFOLK COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT'S RESPONSE TO GLOBAL PANDEMIC

Infectious diseases are disorders caused by organisms such as bacteria, viruses, fungi or parasites. There are many organisms living in and on our bodies, and oftentimes they are harmless or even helpful. However, some organisms can be more detrimental. In December, 2019, the Coronavirus first began to spread in China and is now a pandemic, affecting people worldwide.

The Coronavirus, also known as COVID-19 is similar to a respiratory tract infection that affects sinuses, the nostril, throat, windpipe and lungs. Doctors are still trying to determine the cause this virus, however they are aware of how it can be spread and the necessary steps that it takes to decrease the chances of further spread. The spread of viruses usually occurs when a sick person coughs or sneezes. The droplets can go as far as 6 feet, so if someone breathes them in or swallows them, the virus will travel into the body. It is also possible to get the virus from touching a surface or an object that the virus is on, and then touching your mouth, nose, or even your eyes. It is also important to know that this infectious disease can live for hours, even days, on surfaces that it lands on - it can live on copper for four hours, cardboard for up to twenty-four hours and plastic or stainless steel for up to two to three days.

The Sheriff's Department has been navigating through this global pandemic day by day, and closely following the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) guiding principles for all healthcare and non-healthcare administration for correctional and detention facilities. At all of the Department's facilities, we are regularly sanitizing and disinfecting units and communal areas multiple times each day to keep our staff and inmates/detainees healthy and safe. Also, we are regularly screening every person who enters the facilities, and have posted signage around the buildings about hand-washing, social distancing, sanitization and how to properly disinfect surfaces.

The CDC has put in place specific prevention practices for both incarcerated/detained persons and staff that we are adhering to as best we can. If a person remanded to

our custody shows symptoms of COVID-19 (fever, cough, shortness of breath), they are immediately separated from the general population and unprotected staff. They are immediately assessed by our medical professionals. The Department has reserved a building to house inmates and detainees who are awaiting test results, or are presumptive, or have positive results. For our staff, we continue to issue daily reminders that if someone is feeling symptomatic to stay home and consult their doctors. We screen everyone who enters the buildings and we are asking CDC-recommended questions, along with taking temperatures of anyone who enters the facility. We are proud to say that we take helpful suggestions from anyone who brings them forward. We have been working closely with the Massachusetts Sheriffs' Association about ways in which we can expedite testing for our staff members as well, when needed.

The Department has been working closely with Massachusetts General Hospital and Boston Medical Center to expedite testing for our inmate population and about ways in which to minimize contact between our escorting officers and inmates/detainees and the general public. We have also been in contact with the National Emergency Management Association (NEMA) and the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) to receive the supplies that we will need moving forward, including additional masks, gowns, Tyvek suits, goggles and gloves.

Lastly, we would like to thank everyone who continues to work tirelessly through these challenging times. Much like police officers, firefighters, Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT), paramedics, health care providers, and DOC staff, we must stand behind our oaths to serve and protect all while taking care of ourselves, our staff members, and the men and women in our care and custody as best as we can. We are much stronger and safer because of the commitments of the men and women who come to work every day to keep peace and calm during this global pandemic that continues to grow every day.



# GOOD SAMARITANS DONATE PROTECTIVE MASKS TO SCSD TO SAFEGUARD AGAINST COVID-19

As most are now aware, the primary ways in which COVID-19 is spread is by contact with an infected surface and droplet infection, which occurs when a person simply coughs or sneezes, and germ-filled droplets of mucus or saliva spread into the air and are ingested by another person. If another person is within six feet, these secretions can land on the bystander's face and body or he/she can breathe them in.

Despite the extreme outbreak of COVID-19, and its rapid expansion globally, our first responders and essential employees are still required to work. In order for them to be able to protect themselves from contracting the virus, personal protective equipment (PPE) is a necessity. An example of PPE, and probably one of most utilized pieces of equipment, is the N-95 mask, which is used to protect wearers from airborne particles.

Recently, Richard Leiter, a friend of Captain Dave Granese, the Department's Director of Vocational Education, was kind enough to donate (120) N-95 masks to the correction officers here at the Sheriff's Department. Richard and his wife Carolyn are from Derry, New Hampshire, and the couple owns their own revived furniture store. When the stories about first responders and medical professionals' COVID-19-related PPE shortages began airing, the Leiter's thought of Captain Granese and donating masks to Derry's first responders.



With the global shortage of N-95 masks and other personal protective equipment, Sheriff Steven W. Tompkins and staff are extremely grateful for Richard and Carolyn Leiter's generous donation. It is our priority to ensure that we are keeping all of our essential employees safe, while keeping the men and women remanded to our care and custody safe and healthy as well.



# How To Prevent Coronavirus disease (COVID-19)



HELP STOP THE SPREADING



**Avoid  
Close Contact**



**Stay Home  
If You're Sick**

CLEAN YOUR HANDS OFTEN

**Use soap & water for at least 30 seconds,  
especially after going to the bathroom; before eating;  
and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.**

**If soap and water are not readily available,  
use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.**

**Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.**

**Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue,  
then throw the tissue in the trash.**

**Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using  
a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.**

## WHAT ARE SYMPTOMS?

**COUGH • FEVER • TIREDNESS • SORE THROAT • DIFFICULTY BREATHING**



**SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL ADVICE  
IF YOU SHOW SIGNS OR SYMPTOMS**