



*Commonwealth of Massachusetts*

August 1, 2020

Dear Local Leaders/Superintendents/Local Boards of Health -

The Commonwealth has issued guidance around holding large gatherings and graduation ceremonies to allow people to celebrate special occasions in a responsible way. We know that this time of year is usually filled with celebrations and we are grateful for the many residents of the Commonwealth who have followed the guidance to keep people safe; however, we are increasingly hearing disturbing reports of large gatherings, including high school graduation events, where individuals are not wearing a face covering or social distancing.

This behavior can dramatically accelerate the spread of COVID-19.

The Commonwealth's current guidance limits indoor gatherings to no more than 25 people and outdoor gatherings to 100 people. Graduation ceremonies can also be held under specific [guidelines](#) issued by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Please take this opportunity to remind your residents, families and students of these guidelines.

The residents of the Commonwealth have worked hard over the last few months to bring down the number of positive cases and slow the spread of the virus. That progress cannot be lost because of the actions of a few, and everyone needs to do their part to protect to protect their families, their friends, their neighbors and their communities.

We thank you all for your attention to this matter and ongoing collaboration in keeping our communities safe during this time.

Sincerely,

Marylou Sudders, Secretary of Health and Human Services and COVID-19 Command Center Director  
James Peyser, Secretary of Education  
Jeffrey C. Riley, Commissioner of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education  
Dr. Monica Bharel, Commissioner of the Department of Public Health