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Dear neighbors,

I hope that you and your families are staying safe and healthy during this difficult time. As our city is working hard to provide resources to our residents that will help us get through to the other side of this pandemic, I'd like to provide an update on some of the work my team and I have focused on over the last several weeks. We've organized over 170 volunteers to check in on our seniors in District 2, making over 5,000 phone calls so far. I've also introduced a number of resolutions and hearing orders at the City Council to support communities impacted by this pandemic.

I continue to urge residents to practice physical distancing to protect ourselves and our loved ones. I know it is very difficult to stay home and be isolated from friends, to not be able to go outside and enjoy public spaces with others as the weather improves. However, it is critical that we follow guidelines so that we flatten the curve, and not overwhelm our medical system & healthcare workers.

Please find some more information regarding our efforts below:

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## **Seniors Calls in District 2**

Our seniors are one of the most impacted populations during this pandemic, as

they are at higher risk of complications. As they are advised to stay indoors, many of them may feel isolated. There are also reports of scammers targeting senior citizens. With this in mind, I've coordinated phone calls with volunteers to our seniors living throughout District 2, using this as a way of checking in with our neighbors, to provide helpful information, warn them to be wary of scammers, and to make them feel supported during this time of physical distancing.

So far, we have over 170 volunteers, with over 5,000 calls made throughout District 2. **If you are interested in volunteering, please sign up on the [Google Doc here](#).** Once the form is complete, our office will connect with you in the near future regarding contact information for seniors and a script to follow along. [You can watch a WBZ segment on our efforts here](#). Thank you also to our great nonprofit organizations in District 2 highlighted here for your work to protect our most vulnerable.

**If you are looking for more opportunities to help our seniors,** the Age Strong Commission has launched an initiative called [Good Neighbors](#) with Nesterly to provide critical contact-free home deliveries and social support for at-risk individuals. If you would like to sign up to help deliver food to seniors, you can do so on the Good Neighbor's [volunteer sign up website](#). If you have any questions relating to the Good Neighbor initiative, please contact Age Strong at 617-635-4366, or [Agestrong@Boston.gov](mailto:Agestrong@Boston.gov).

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## **Resolution Supporting Nurses and Healthcare Workers During the COVID-19 Pandemic**

I filed this resolution, passed unanimously at the Council, to offer support to our nurses & healthcare workers on the frontline of the COVID-19 pandemic. This calls for hospitals, industry leaders, and other policymakers to provide healthcare workers with the sufficient equipment & appropriate working conditions as they work to combat this spread of this virus.



## CITY OF BOSTON IN CITY COUNCIL

### RESOLUTION SUPPORTING OUR NURSES AND HEALTHCARE WORKERS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

**WHEREAS:** As we continue to grapple with the spread of COVID-19, we must recognize that our nurses and healthcare workers are on the front lines of this pandemic, and they play a critical and indispensable part in delivery of medical care;

**WHEREAS:** As nurses and healthcare workers risk their own health to serve patients, we need to support them by ensuring that they have the sufficient equipment and appropriate facilities to handle COVID-19 cases, and doing our part in alleviating their workload by practicing physical distancing and frequent cleaning; *and*

**WHEREAS:** We urge that all frontline healthcare workers be provided with appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE). Even people who are asymptomatic can be COVID-19 positive, so everyone caring for patients should have the proper protection; *and*

**WHEREAS:** We urge that hospitals consider triage outside of their facilities, and designate floors for COVID-19 patients to reduce exposure; *and*

**WHEREAS:** We need more medical services and staff right now to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, and we ask for a halt to all hospital closures and staff reductions; *and*

**WHEREAS:** We need to support our frontline healthcare workers with childcare, paid leave, and facility provided scrubs so they can care for patients and also limit spread to their families and communities; *and*

**WHEREAS:** We need to ensure that there are enough environmental services and cleaning staff in hospitals to limit spread of the virus; *and*

**WHEREAS:** We all must continue to advocate for widespread physical distancing in the public to slow the spread of the virus, so that our medical system is not overwhelmed all at once, and that our healthcare workers can effectively treat patients; *and*

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:**

That the Boston City Council recognizes and supports our nurses and frontline healthcare workers during the COVID-19 pandemic, and that the City Council urges hospitals, industry leaders, other policymakers to provide the appropriate equipment, facilities, and personnel to our nurses and healthcare workers so that they can efficiently and safely treat our patients during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Filed in Council: April 1st, 2020

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## Resolution Calling for Insurance Carriers to Provide Continuous Coverage During the COVID-19 Pandemic

This resolution, also passed unanimously, called for insurance carriers to provide continuous coverage for their policyholders. It is critical that residents have continuous access to their health insurance, as well as other lines of insurance that are necessary to their safety & economic security. The resolution urges companies and the MA Division of Insurance (DOI) work to ensure continuous insurance coverage through modified payment plans.



## CITY OF BOSTON IN CITY COUNCIL

### RESOLUTION URGING INSURANCE CARRIERS TO PROVIDE CONTINUOUS COVERAGE TO RESIDENTS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

**WHEREAS:** The 2019 novel coronavirus, also known as COVID-19, has infected hundreds of thousands of people worldwide, and as of March 24th, there are 197 cases of COVID-19 infections in Boston, 1,159 cases in the state, and the number is rising each day;

**WHEREAS:** The City of Boston and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts have now ordered the closing of nonessential services in order to prevent the spread of COVID-19, and restaurants can no longer offer dine-in services, only takeout and delivery services; *and*

**WHEREAS:** These new restrictions and closings led to a large number of job loss and revenue loss for businesses and workers, particularly those who work in restaurants, hotels, and other nonessential service industries; *and*

**WHEREAS:** As we expect COVID-19 cases to continue to rise, it is critical that we ensure everyone has access to health insurance that pays for COVID-19 testing, treatment, and other critical health services, even as workers may lose coverage because of job loss and income loss; *and*

**WHEREAS:** Currently, the Massachusetts Division of Insurance has issued a bulletin requiring all commercial insurers and the Group Insurance Commission to cover medically necessary telehealth services in the same manner they cover in-person services, and that they cover COVID-19 related treatment and testing without requiring cost-sharing of any kind or prior authorization; *and*

**WHEREAS:** These are important steps to safeguard the health of our residents during this pandemic, but we need to make sure that our residents will still be able to have health insurance even if they lose their jobs or cannot pay the premiums. We also need to ensure that residents can easily access MassHealth and insurance through the state's Health Connector; *and*

**WHEREAS:** Aside from health insurance, many residents may lose auto, home or renter's or life insurance coverage because of loss of income and they cannot pay the premium. Auto, home and renter's insurance are critical for the safety and wellbeing of our residents, and losing these coverages would be detrimental to their economic security; *and*

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:**

That the Boston City Council urges insurance carriers to provide continuous coverage to their policyholders during the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as consideration of relief or modified payment plans if the policyholder cannot pay premiums due to financial hardship during this crisis. It further urges the Massachusetts Division of Insurance to issue guidance and requirements ensuring that insurance companies will not drop coverage for policyholders during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Filed in Council: April 1st, 2020

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## Hearing Order on Impact of COVID-19 on Veterans & Military Families

I filed this hearing order to discuss resources available through Boston's Veteran Services to our city's veterans & military families. Many of our veterans & military families may see their services disrupted because of COVID-19, and we have veterans who are homeless, senior, or disabled that are in need. We held this hearing on April 27th and discussed resources available through Veteran Services, and how we can ensure access to these services.



## CITY OF BOSTON IN CITY COUNCIL

### ORDER FOR A HEARING TO DISCUSS RESOURCES AVAILABLE THROUGH BOSTON'S VETERAN SERVICES DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

**WHEREAS:** The 2019 novel coronavirus, also known as COVID-19, has infected hundreds of thousands of people worldwide so far, and its spread has impacted millions as governments and institutions have placed restrictions on travel and closed facilities;

**WHEREAS:** COVID-19 is impacting everyone, including veterans and military families, many of whom are in need of services and benefits that may be disrupted because of COVID-19; *and*

**WHEREAS:** It is critical we discuss specific programs and services available to veterans and military families, including the Veterans Administration Health Care System, city and state financial assistance available to low-income veterans, ensuring we continue to identify homeless veterans and provide them with access to housing and recovery services; *and*

**WHEREAS:** In general, elderly are more susceptible to COVID-19 infections, and we have many elderly veterans who might be at risk. Moreover, veterans rely on the Veterans Health Administration (VA) hospitals for their care, which might not be the closest hospital to a veteran if they need urgent care; *and*

**WHEREAS:** We need to ensure that as testing expands, our veterans are able to access those tests if they visit VA hospitals; *and*

**WHEREAS:** Moreover, for disabled veterans and older veterans who has challenges with travel, it will be difficult for them to get food or shop for groceries because of COVID-19, therefore we need to think about ways to ensure that our elderly and disabled veterans are able to access food if there are travel restrictions; *and*

**WHEREAS:** Veterans and military families have proudly served our country and earned their benefits, and we must ensure that they are able to receive services and benefits that they are entitled to during the COVID-19 pandemic; *and*

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT ORDERED:**

That the appropriate Committee of the Boston City Council holds a hearing to discuss resources available to veterans and military families through Boston's Veteran Services during the COVID-19 pandemic. Representatives from the City of Boston's Veterans Services, the VA Boston Healthcare System, and other relevant and interested parties shall be invited to attend.

Filed in Council: April 1st, 2020

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### **Resolution Supporting Our Chinese and Asian American Communities During the COVID-19 Pandemic**

Due to the virus, there are unfortunately many reports of racism and discrimination against Chinese and Asian communities in the United States and around the world. This resolution affirms the Council's support for the Chinese and Asian communities during this time. Moreover, we recommit the City Council in standing up against any form of racism.



**CITY OF BOSTON  
IN CITY COUNCIL  
RESOLUTION SUPPORTING OUR CHINESE AND ASIAN  
COMMUNITIES DURING THE COVID-19 EPIDEMIC**

- WHEREAS:** The 2019 novel coronavirus, known as “COVID-19” was first reported in Wuhan, China, in December of 2019; *and*
- WHEREAS:** The COVID-19 outbreak infected tens of thousands of people in China, with other countries also seeing cases of COVID-19 infections in recent weeks; *and*
- WHEREAS:** With the spread of COVID-19, there are unfortunately many reports of racism and discrimination against Chinese and Asian communities in the United States and around the world; *and*
- WHEREAS:** There are reports of harassment against those who are of Asian descent, with incidents where people are subjected to verbal insults, or that they are being actively avoided in the public; *and*
- WHEREAS:** In Boston, we have seen a steep decline in business for Chinatown restaurants and shops, and in the public meeting regarding COVID-19, one Asian Boston Public Schools student recounted that when she was taking the train to school while wearing a mask, people would actively move away from her; *and*
- WHEREAS:** There is only one case of COVID-19 in Massachusetts so far, but fear and misinformation around this disease have led to blanket discrimination against the Asian community, and emboldened racist sentiments; *and*
- WHEREAS:** Our office has continued to meet with Chinatown and South End residents in various housing developments to provide updated and accurate medical information on the virus, including a list of precautions of how to prevent the virus. Language access, such as translation and interpretation services, is a critical component of this outreach; *and*
- WHEREAS:** City Councilors, the Mayor, and various organizations have put together lunches and initiatives to encourage people to shop in Chinatown and to dispel misinformation. However, with recent reports that COVID-19 may further spread globally, discrimination against our Chinese and Asian communities will unfortunately likely to continue; *and*
- NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:** That the Boston City Council expresses its public support and empathy for the Chinese and Asian communities during the COVID-19 epidemic, as well as recommits itself to fighting discrimination and racism of all forms.

Filed on: March 4, 2020

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**Resolution Supporting our Immigrant Communities**

Our immigrant communities are hit hard by this pandemic, as many of our neighbors work in jobs that are deeply impacted by COVID-19. Moreover, immigrants may also face more barriers in accessing healthcare and benefits. It is critical that we continue to support all our neighbors in these difficult times.



**CITY OF BOSTON  
IN CITY COUNCIL**

**RESOLUTION SUPPORTING OUR IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES  
DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

**WHEREAS:** The COVID-19 pandemic has an unprecedented impact on our economy, health, and society. Many communities are hit hard by this pandemic, our immigrant neighbors among them; *and*

**WHEREAS:** Many of our immigrant residents work in restaurants, retail, hotels, and industries deeply impacted by COVID-19, and many are laid off or furloughed because of business closures. Moreover, many perform essential work in roles such as custodians, or work in grocery stores that are serving the public on the frontline of this crisis. Many also work in jobs that offer no paid sick leave, making it difficult for our many in our immigrant workforce to leave work and self-quarantine if needed; *and*

**WHEREAS:** Moreover, because of the Public Charge rule that make immigrants who receive benefits such as Medicaid and SNAP potentially ineligible for green cards and visas, many immigrants may be reluctant to seek medical care or apply for assistance if they are impacted by COVID-19; *and*

**WHEREAS:** Due to their immigration status, many immigrants are also not qualified for federal stimulus checks, unemployment benefits, or other types of assistance, which makes life even more difficult for those who lost their jobs because of business closures. Some immigrants may also face obstacles in applying for benefits because of language barriers; *and*

**WHEREAS:** Health disparities also impact our immigrant communities. Emergency doctors from Massachusetts General and Brigham and Women's Hospital have reported an influx of Latinx, Spanish speaking patients who are critically-ill; *and*

**WHEREAS:** Those with underlying health conditions are also more vulnerable to COVID-19, and data have shown that low income communities and communities of color - both communities with large numbers of immigrants - have higher rates of underlying diseases such as asthma and diabetes that make them more likely to suffer complications from COVID-19; *and*

**WHEREAS:** There is still lack of data about COVID-19 patients that are disaggregated by race or ethnicity, especially at the federal level, which make it difficult to accurately identify inequities and provide support to communities that need assistance the most; *and*

**WHEREAS:** Our immigrant communities deserve our respect and support, during this pandemic and after this pandemic. We must do what we can to ensure that our immigrants and communities of color have equitable access to resources that keep them healthy during this pandemic; *and*

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:**

That the Boston City Council offers its continual support to our immigrant communities, and that it continues to advocate for measures and policies that would protect the health, safety, and financial stability of our immigrants neighbors.

Filed in Council: April 15th, 2020

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## **COVID-19 Resources and Updates**

As a reminder, the city is encouraging everyone to wear a face covering over their mouth and nose when in public. This covering can be a mask, cloth, scarf, bandana, etc. Wearing a face cover will help to reduce the risk of a person spreading the virus, especially if they are asymptotic and unaware.

The Boston Public Health Commission issued a Public Health Advisory requesting all residents, except for essential workers, to stay home from 9pm to 6am everyday, until May 4th. We continue to urge residents to stay at home as much as possible during the day, and only go out for essential needs, such as grocery shopping or pharmacy pickup.

The City has also announced that the due date for property tax bills in Boston is extended until June 1st. Property tax bills were previously due on May 1st, but the city has decided to extend the due date for property tax bills to give residents more flexibility. The city is also waiving interest on late property tax and motor vehicle excise tax payments until June 30th, if the bill was originally due after March 10. Therefore, any resident who is facing a late fine for not

paying their excise bill on time will have a grace period of no late fees until June 30th.

As part of the city's mortgage relief plan, the city has secured an agreement with 12 of the largest housing lenders in Boston to defer homeowners' mortgage payments by 3 months, and longer if needed. After the deferral period, homeowners will not be required to pay the deferred payments in one lump sum, and will be able to work with their lenders on a repayment plan. The 12 lenders that will offer this relief to homeowners include: Bank of America, Boston Private, Cambridge Trust Company, Century Bank, Citizens Bank, City of Boston Credit Union, Dedham Savings Bank, Eastern Bank, Mortgage Network, Inc., Prime Lending, Salem Five Bank, and Santander Bank. [Please see here for more information.](#)

For more information on the city's actions on COVID-19, [please visit here.](#)

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## In the Community

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Thank you to Procter & Gamble and Gillette for your generous donation of cleaning supplies & personal hygiene products to the residents at the New England Center for Homeless Veterans. Our veterans served our country & now it is our turn to support them! Proud to join Commissioner Robert Santiago and the Boston Veterans Services in welcoming P&G.

In March, I was able to talk with with Principal Soo Hoo at Josiah Quincy Elementary School, as well as staff at





the Josiah Quincy Community Center and at the Wang YMCA of Chinatown. Thank you for providing food, assistance for residents in need. Let's continue to work together!

Thank you to the workers of UPS and Capitol Waste Services for your professionalism and hard work. These workers are on the frontlines for us, delivering packages, supplies, trash removal and recycling. We are proud of these workers and their outstanding commitment to our city!



Proud to join South End and South Boston residents in March for the City's literature drop outreach. Thanks to Mayor Walsh, our dedicated city employees, and volunteers for coordinating the lit drop. It is critical that we work together, respect physical distancing and provide accurate information to flatten the curve.



I visited the dedicated, professional team at The Blackstone Elementary School and was so proud to see such compassion and empathy from this team, helping families and Boston Public Schools students with meals. Thanks to the principal, administrators, nurses, teachers, custodial staff, Boston School Police and volunteers.



If I can be of any assistance, please do not hesitate to contact my office at 617-635-3203 or [ed.flynn@boston.gov](mailto:ed.flynn@boston.gov).