

# QCC offers solutions for post-pandemic recovery

WORCESTER — A Community Conversation hosted by Quinsigamond Community College for government, social service and religious organizations in Worcester drew over 60 attendees this week. The hour-long virtual meeting addressed ways to accelerate economic and civic recovery post-pandemic, using education as a pathway to success. The College gave a snapshot into what it can offer the organizations, which serve the underrepresented populations in Worcester and surrounding communities that have been so devastated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

“We have the programs and the training and together with our community organizations’ help we can thrive. We are counting on you and your partnerships to achieve this,” President Luis G. Pedraja, Ph.D. said.

Chair for the QCC Board of Trustees Sue Mailman noted that as a community college, QCC has the unique ability to deliver pathways that will help Worcester communities grow and prosper.

“We need to get ahead of the game and lead the way in retraining and developing a stronger Worcester,”

Ms. Mailman said. “We need to create conditions for our underrepresented populations to succeed and community colleges have a real lead in this.”

QCC’s Vice President of Academic Affairs James Keane, Ed.D., said the pandemic proved to the world just how nimble a community college could be, and what was learned would be beneficial for years to come. He described the two-week timeframe in which QCC successfully transitioned to remote instruction and said the new virtual course modalities, coupled with increased online support services, have increased access and engagement in higher education, particularly for adult learners. Dr. Keane described new advisory boards that are a part of each college program. Board members advise on relevant workforce curriculum and course design to prepare students when they enter the workforce.

Lillian Ortiz, Ed.D., vice president for Enrollment Management and Student Engagement, highlighted the financial opportunities available at QCC. The College received \$13 million in Cares Act funds that have helped

3,800 students impacted by the pandemic with tuition, fees, laptops etc. An additional \$9 million is still to be awarded.

“The core mission of the College is to remove barriers that impede students from attending college,” she said.

Other supports and resources of note include the Student Success Center with its academic tutoring, QCC’s Food Pantry that feeds approximately 50 families per week throughout the year, and the Resource Center that coordinates with local agencies to offer assistance for students in need.

“We have a strong mentoring program and our Accessibility Services Department that serves 1,000 students annually on campus, offering accessible, equitable and inclusiveness to all members of the community,” Dr. Ortiz said, adding, “We have also been designated as a military friendly school.”

Carol King, dean of College and Career Pathways told of QCC’s 25 free English literacy programs from beginner to intermediate, as well as the HiSet and GED programs that even include a GED prep classes in Spanish.

“We understand the challenges of going back to school

as an adult,” she said. “We offer free college readiness classes virtually any day and time.”

Kathie Manning, dean of Center for Workforce Development & Continuing Education described the flexibility of the programs and training that is being offered such as a new online, self-paced, professional development training subscription model. She said the College offers numerous programs at low to no cost and many even support transportation and childcare. Recent programs have included nurse assistant/home health aide, help desk, medical assistant and lead teachers for early childhood programs, with some offered in Spanish.

“Programs generally take six months to complete and classes begin every week throughout the year,” she said.

Nichole Wheeler, coordinator Career Services & Credit for Prior Learning mentioned the variety of ways students can gain credits for prior life experiences and save money and time.

“We meet with students and evaluate and match what they have with QCC courses to try and give them college credit,” said.

According to Dr. Pedraja, the COVID-19 pandemic brought unique conditions to community colleges that have historically seen an upsurge in enrollment during economic downturns. Today, on a national level 40 percent of students are now canceling their plans to enroll in college with 30 percent giving COVID-19 related reasons. Diverse populations have seen the steepest declines in college enrollment. However, He told the organizations in attendance there is reason to be hopeful as the region looks ahead.

“Hope is at the core of who we are at a community college. We are a beacon of hope for our students and our community. Losing students impacts us as an entire community and we cannot thrive if we leave anyone behind,” Dr. Pedraja said. “It takes a community to help students succeed and you know where your needs are and with your help, we can reach out and find strategies to bring people to college.”

For more information about QCC, contact Josh Martin, Director of Institutional Communications at 508-854-7513 or [jmartin@qcc.mass.edu](mailto:jmartin@qcc.mass.edu).

# State officials announce key reopening dates

BY KEVIN FLANDERS  
STAFF WRITER

REGION — State officials recently announced several key dates in the continued reopening of the economy.

With steady declines in weekly COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations, the Baker-Polito Administration is advancing in Phase 4 of the state’s reopening plan. Officials are also pleased with the progress of the vaccination program, which has made it far more difficult for the virus to spread.

Effective May 10, large venues such as arenas and ballparks were authorized to increase capacity to 25 percent. The Commonwealth has also greenlighted amusement parks, theme parks, and outdoor water parks to operate at 50-percent capacity. Prior to reopening, these venues must submit safety plans to the Department of Public Health.

Residents are also looking forward to getting back to group athletic events.

“Road races and other large outdoor amateur or professional group athletic events will be permitted to take place with staggered starts after submitting safety plans to a local board of health,” said Gov. Charlie Baker.

Youth and adult amateur sports tournaments are once

again allowed for moderate-risk and high-risk sports.

Beginning May 29, gathering limits will increase to 200 people indoors and 250 people outdoors for event venues, public settings, and private settings.

Subject to public health and vaccination data, the following venues will be able to reopen on May 29: street festivals, parades, and agricultural festivals. All events must reopen at 50-percent of their previous capacity.

Also permitted to reopen on May 29 are bars, beer gardens, breweries, wineries, and distilleries. A 90-minute limit will be imposed on each guest’s stay, and no dance floors will be permitted to reopen.

On Aug. 1, the following industries are slated to reopen: dance clubs and nightclubs; saunas, hot tubs, and steam rooms at fitness centers and health clubs; indoor water parks; and ball pits.

Also on Aug. 1, capacity for all industries is expected to return to 100 percent. Pending approval from health officials, all gathering limits will be lifted.

Residents are reminded that all target dates are dependent on continued positive health trends. This includes declining COVID-19 numbers statewide through the spring and summer.

State officials also urge all eli-

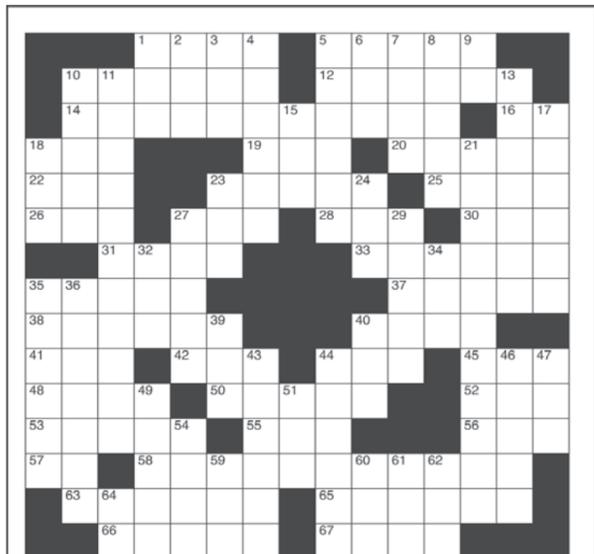
gible residents to schedule their vaccinations. This will help further combat the virus and allow industries to reopen sooner, officials said. If statistics trend positively earlier than expected, the August 1 date could be pushed up.

“Depending on vaccine distribution and public health data, the administration may consider reevaluating the August 1 date,” Baker said. “The Department of Public Health will also continue to issue guidance as needed.”

As the state continues to reopen, many residents are wondering when they will be able to say goodbye to masks. Although the state’s order on face coverings was relaxed for some outdoor settings last month, residents should expect that masks will be sticking around for the foreseeable future.

“Face coverings will still be required at all times in indoor public places,” Baker said. “Face coverings will also continue to be required at all times at events, whether held indoors or outdoors, in a public space or private home, except for when eating or drinking.”

For more information about the state’s COVID-19 regulations and target reopening dates, visit [www.mass.gov/reopening](http://www.mass.gov/reopening).



### CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Large, flightless birds
- 5. Lifts and moves heavy objects
- 10. Hyundai sedan
- 12. Wear away by erosion
- 14. Arranged alphabetically
- 16. Top prosecutor
- 18. \_\_\_-de-sac: Dead-end street
- 19. Digital audiotape
- 20. Linguistics pioneer
- 22. Singer DiFranco
- 23. Arms of the sea
- 25. Near-reach weapon (abbr.)
- 26. Ballplayer’s accessory
- 27. You get one at the beach
- 28. U.S. founding father
- 30. W. Australia indigenous people
- 31. Amounts of time
- 33. Put on the shelf
- 35. Russian dynasty member
- 37. City along the Elbe River
- 38. A peninsula between the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf
- 40. Actor Damon
- 41. \_\_\_ King Cole, musician
- 42. Company that rings receipts
- 44. Scatter
- 45. Basics
- 48. Part of a door
- 50. Indicates silence
- 52. Moved quickly on foot
- 53. Monetary units
- 55. A place to crash
- 56. Many subconsciouses
- 57. Group of countries
- 58. About line of latitude
- 63. Female follower of Bacchus
- 65. A dentist can treat it
- 66. Dull brown fabrics
- 67. Int’l nonprofit

### CLUES DOWN

- 1. Midway between northeast and east
- 2. Partner to cheese
- 3. One from Utah
- 4. A way to move
- 5. Playing cards
- 6. Baseball stat
- 7. Long river in western Asia
- 8. Grandmothers
- 9. Entertainment legend Sullivan
- 10. Steam bath room
- 11. One who kills
- 13. Food
- 15. Swiss river
- 17. Fleet
- 18. Taxi
- 21. Working class
- 23. More (Spanish)
- 24. High schoolers’ test
- 27. Heavily built goat antelope
- 29. Murdered in his bathtub
- 32. Tease good-naturedly
- 34. Morsel
- 35. Cause persistent resentment
- 36. A radioactive element
- 39. Perform in a play
- 40. Witty remark: Bon \_\_\_
- 43. A great place to kayak
- 44. Conclude by reasoning
- 46. In an unfavorable way
- 47. Complex of nerve tissues (abbr.)
- 49. Machine for making paper
- 51. Feline
- 54. Yugo’s hatchback
- 59. Check
- 60. Press against lightly
- 61. Wind-pollinated plants
- 62. \_\_\_compoop
- 64. Commercial

# Community members elected to Health Foundation

WORCESTER — The Board of The Health Foundation of Central Massachusetts recently elected the following individuals to serve three-year terms as Community Members on Board Committees:

Elvis Mendez, MS, Co-Director of Neighbor to Neighbor Massachusetts, was elected to serve his first three-year term on the Community Outreach Committee.

Daniel P. Ricciardi, MBA, Interim Chief Investment Officer and Assistant Treasurer at the College of the Holy Cross, was elected to serve his first three-year term on the Investment Committee.

B. Joyce Gilmore, RN, community activist, was elected to serve her first three-year term on the Nominating Committee.

The Foundation was established in 1999 with the pro-

ceeds from the sale of Central Massachusetts Health Care, Inc., a physician-initiated, not-for-profit HMO. The Foundation currently has assets of around \$90 million and has awarded grants totaling almost \$48 million to improve the health of those who live or work in Central Massachusetts. For further information about the Foundation’s grant programs, please visit The Health Foundation’s website at [www.hfcm.org](http://www.hfcm.org) or call (508) 438-0009.

# In-person open studio returns at Massasoit Art Guild

REGION — Massasoit Art Guild is returning to in person open studio. On Wednesday, May 19, we will be opening to our studio in person.

Open Studio is from 9:30 a.m. - noon each Wednesday. Bring your supplies, your creativity and get back to painting together in person! The support, caring critiques, and encouragement is invaluable. Membership is required. Our studio

is at 108 School St, East Brookfield.

We will be following CDC Covid guidelines. Mask required. If you are not a member and would like more information please email us at [massasoitartguild@gmail.com](mailto:massasoitartguild@gmail.com) or visit us at [massasoitartguild@gmail.com](http://massasoitartguild@gmail.com) for membership information.

