



North Quabbin Health Collaborative



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Public Health Newsletter

COVERING: November 17th – November 23rd, 2025

PUBLISHED November 28, 2025

Upcoming Events:

Next Collaborative Meeting

Monday December 1st at 6pm

Location: Orange Town Hall

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Reminders

- **Saturday November 29th is Small Business Day** - Support the small businesses in our community

Craft Fairs:

WARWICK

Holiday Fair located at Warwick Community School: Saturday, November 29th from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Be sure to mark your calendars for this festive event where you can get a jump-start on your holiday shopping by browsing over 40 craft tables full of local, quality items! See the flier in this newsletter for more details.

PETERSHAM

Holiday Fair located at Petersham Congregational Church: Saturday December 6th from 9am to 2pm
There will be Christmas crafts, Christmas decorations food and raffles. Something for everyone!

QUABBIN VALLEY HEALTHCARE

Holiday Craft Fair Saturday November 22nd from 9am to 2pm. Crafts, Basket Raffles, Chance Auction, Baked Goods, Lunch Counter, Santa Claus!



Visit the North Quabbin Health Collaborative website to download materials and see additional information at: <https://www.northquabbinhc.org/>

Don't forget to send your area news and activities to cpage@townoforange.org to be included in the next newsletter.

Vaccines and Autism

DPH Commissioner rebukes misleading assertions about vaccines and autism
11/20/2025

Boston — Vaccines do not cause autism, and there is no link between childhood vaccines and autism. This has been proven repeatedly through decades of rigorous, high-quality research involving millions of children worldwide. The evidence is clear, consistent, and overwhelming.

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) rejects the assertion posted Nov. 19, 2025, on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website which suggests that the statement “vaccines do not cause autism” is not evidence-based or that studies have failed to rule out a connection between childhood vaccines and autism. Such claims are factually incorrect and deliberately misleading. They contradict the global scientific consensus and undermine public confidence in vaccines. Vaccines are one of the most effective and life-saving interventions in the history of medicine and public health.

For an official federal website to include such misinformation is deeply troubling and even dangerous. It fuels misinformation and leads to misplaced doubt that puts children, families, and communities at risk for serious illness. These claims reflect ideology, not evidence.

DPH is committed to providing the public with accurate, science-based information. We continue to monitor emerging research, consult with leading experts, and update our guidance as new high-quality evidence becomes available. And we will continue to push back forcefully against misinformation and disinformation that threaten the health and safety of the people of Massachusetts — especially when it appears on official federal platforms. We are currently reviewing our website and are removing links to CDC content that contains or amplifies such false and misleading claims.

—Public Health Commissioner Robbie Goldstein, MD, PhD

Governor Healey Condemns Federal Misinformation about Vaccines and Autism

“The science is real: Vaccines are safe, effective and lifesaving”

BOSTON – Governor Maura Healey issued the following statement regarding the CDC adding inaccurate claims about links between vaccines and autism on its website at the direction of Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr.

“It is disturbing and sad to witness the federal government undermining the very foundation of public health based on conspiracy theories and false information. But that's what's been happening. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – once the world's foremost source of evidence-driven public health guidance – has taken another step down a dangerous path shaped by ideology rather than science and data.

“The posting last week on CDC's website – at the direction of Secretary Kennedy – insinuating a link between vaccines and autism is the latest troubling installment. This claim is wrong and directly contradicts to decades of scientific research involving millions of people.

“The science is unequivocal, and the evidence is overwhelming: there is no connection between vaccines and autism. Vaccines are safe, effective and lifesaving. They are the backbone of modern disease prevention and the well-being of our communities. Putting false information out there puts people at real risk. Parents need honest, accurate information that will give their kids the best start in life and keep them healthy and safe.

“Claims that spread lies and cast doubt on proven science pose a serious threat to that health and safety. We have seen this before. In recent months, the CDC has issued guidance and promoted information that is baseless and misleading. This includes false claims about the dangers of Tylenol during pregnancy, unsupported shifts in COVID-19 vaccination recommendations, lies about the safety and effectiveness of fluoride in drinking water and deliberate efforts to remove or suppress vital information because it conflicts with the opinions of the Secretary.

“Massachusetts is home to some of the best health care, the strongest public health system, and the most groundbreaking biomedical research in the world. That is why today, I stand firmly with Public Health Commissioner Dr. Robbie Goldstein and our Department of Public Health in rejecting in the strongest possible terms the misinformation now appearing on federal websites – including CDC's. We advise Massachusetts residents to approach this content with caution because we no longer feel confident in or comfortable with the quality and accuracy of the information. Instead, we encourage Bay Staters to rely on health information provided by DPH and other state sources that are honest, evidence-based, and worthy of the public's trust. Our residents deserve nothing less.

“We will continue to be guided by reliable science and by the expertise of those on the front lines of medicine and public health. And we reject false claims that are rooted in ideology rather than evidence.”

Calendar of Events

WARWICK: Holiday Fair Saturday, November 29 from 10am to 3pm at the Community School - Small Business Saturday" Holiday Fair. We expect to be offering lunch and a bake sale. Santa has confirmed and we will have live holiday music on the stage.

NEW SALEM Library River Valley Quartet Tuesday, December 2, 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Mark your calendar so you don't miss this musical event with four clarinets (including our own Sue Dunbar on bass clarinet!) playing a mix of seasonal, classical, marches, and more. There will be something for everyone with lots of toe-tappers!

WENDELL Library: TUESDAY, DECEMBER 2: Adult Book Group. Greta & Valdin by Rebecca K Reilly. 10 a.m.

NEW SALEM: Volunteering for Village Neighbors

Village Neighbors, a volunteer-run non-profit organization, helps residents over age 60 in four towns including New Salem stay connected and age independently at home. One of the best things about volunteering for Village Neighbors is it's on your terms and doesn't have to be a huge commitment. You decide what you're interested in doing and then provide those services as your life permits. As volunteers, we are helping our senior neighbors and at the same time helping ourselves by creating connections and friendships. There will be a volunteer orientation Tuesday, December 9, at 6:30 p.m., at the Wendell senior center. Call Village Neighbors at (413) 345-6894 or email volunteers@villageneighbors.org with your contact info if you'd like to attend. At the orientation meeting, you will learn more about our organization, and meet other volunteers. The orientation lasts about an hour, you'll fill out an application and give permission to do a background check. If you plan to provide transportation, we'll need a copy of your driver's license and page one of your insurance coverage selection pages. Please bring contact information for two references.

Community Food Access Resource List

Resource Names	Location	Days/Hours	Contact Information
Good Neighbor Food Pantry	Old Town Hall Wendell, 6 Center St, Wendell	Sundays 11am-noon, Last Name A-K 1st and 3rd Sunday, Last Name L-Z 2nd and 4th Sunday	978-544-3775
The Salvation Army	107 Ridge Ave, Athol	Tuesday 9am-noon, Every other Tuesday delivery	978-249-8111
The Salvation Army	72 Chapman St, Greenfield	Monday 9am-11am, Closed on Holidays	413-773-3154
Our Lady Immaculate Church	192 School St, Athol	Tuesdays 10am-1:30pm	978-249-6790
Greenfield Pop Pantry	2nd Congregation Church, 16 Court Sq, Greenfield	Tuesdays 4:30pm-5:30pm	413-774-4355
Community Food Pantry at Athol High School	2363 Main St, Athol (Located in the back of AHS)	Wednesdays, Summer hours 11am-1pm, School year hours 3pm-5pm	978-249-2435 ext 314
Athol Senior Center	82 Freedom St, Athol	Wednesdays 11am-11:45am	978-249-8986
Orange Council on Aging	St Mary's, 20 West Myrtle St, Orange	Wednesdays 10am-11am	978-544-3481
Turners Falls Mobile Food Bank	62 5th St, Turners Falls	3rd Wednesday of Month 1:30pm-2:30pm	413-419-0079
Orange Food Pantry	118 East Main St, Orange	Thursdays 10am-3pm (If it's a holiday then it will be open on Wednesday. Deliveries on Friday for Athol/Orange)	978-544-2149 (call for deliveries)
St Vincent De Paul/St Mary's Food Pantry	19 Congress St, Orange	Open by appointment only	978-544-6814
Marion's Food Pantry	On the Royalston Common	Open by appointment only	978-895-7887
The Salvation Army	72 Chapman St, Greenfield	Monday-Friday 8:30am-9:30am (Breakfast) 11am-12:30pm (Lunch)	413-773-3154
Our Lady of Peace Church	90 7th St, Turners Falls	Mondays 4pm-5:30pm (Distributing hot meals and grocery bags to go from the sidewalk in front of the church)	413-863-2585
The Salvation Army	107 Ridge Ave, Athol	Tuesdays 4:30pm-5:30pm (Dine in/Delivery)	978-249-8111
Second Congregational Church	16 Court Square, Greenfield	Tuesdays and Wednesdays 4:45pm-5:45pm, hot meals to go Tuesdays and Wednesdays on the side driveway	413-774-4355
Athol Senior Center	82 Freedom St, Athol	Tuesdays and Wednesdays at noon (Must RSVP the day before). For individuals 60 and over and/or disabled. Senior Dining at Lynn's Luncheonette. Enjoy lunch with others. A \$3.50 donation is welcome	978-249-8986 Reserve your meal by 9am the day before you dine
St Frances Church Hall	101 Main St, Athol	Wednesdays (September-May) doors open at 5pm	978-249-7304
Orange United Methodist Church	104 S Main St, Orange	Thursdays 4:30pm-5:15pm (Distributing ready-made meals to heat up at home. We offer deliveries for meals and pantry bags by applications)	413-772-1033 https://www.fccmp.org/community-meals/orange/
Trinitarian Congregational Church	147 Main St, Northfield	Fourth Thursday 4:30pm (Take out meals only. You must RSVP)	413-498-5839
Athol Congregational Church	1225 Chestnut St, Athol	First Friday of the Month, doors open at 5pm, dinner at 5:30pm (Must RSVP by Tuesday for a meal on Friday)	978-249-6202
Meals on Wheels	Athol Senior Center & Orange Council on Aging	LifePath Inc of Greenfield provides home delivered (noontime) meals to homebound seniors, age 60 and older and/or disabled, who are not able to prepare nutritious and balanced meals for themselves.	1-800-732-4636 (call to see if eligible)

Senior Dining Community Resource List

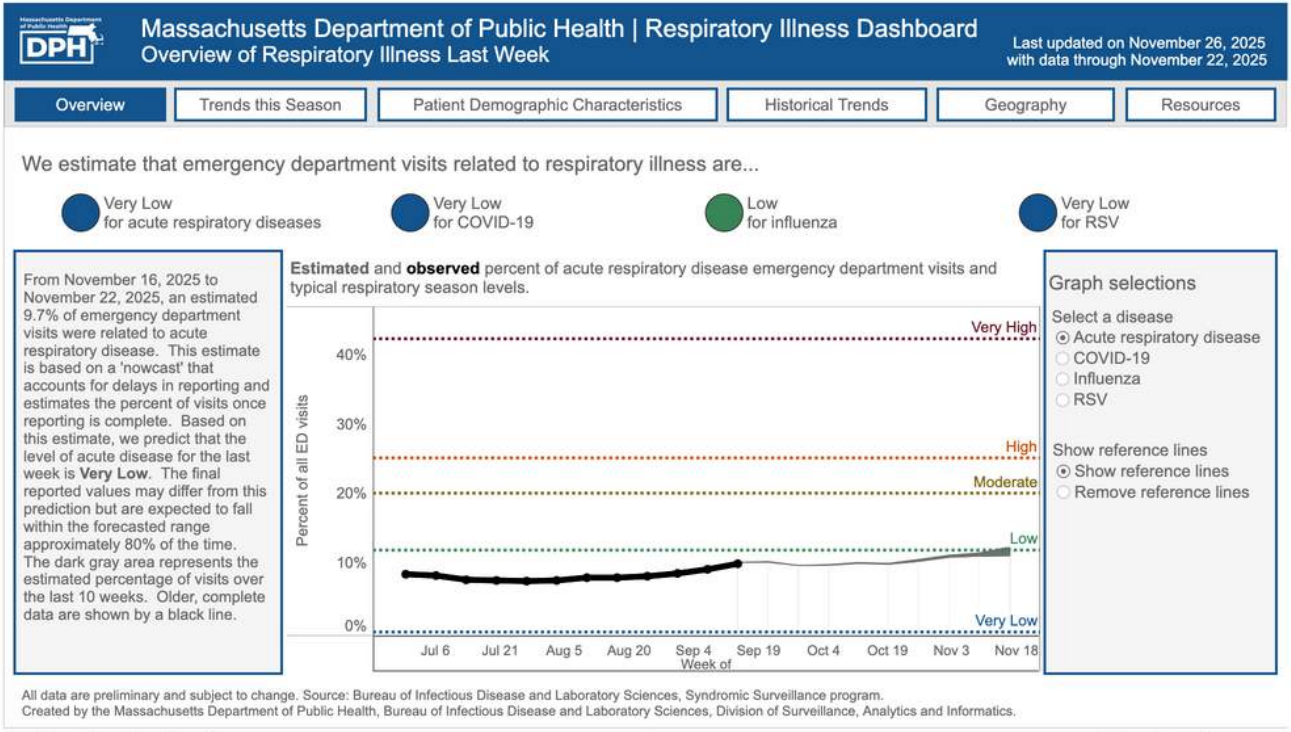
Senior Dining Center or Luncheon Club Location	Serving Days Schedule	Contact/Phone Reservations
Athol Senior Center 82 Freedom Street Athol, MA 01331	Tuesday & Wednesday Congregate	(978) 249-9001
New Salem Luncheon Club Central Congregational Church 22 South Main St. New Salem, MA 01355	2nd & 4th Friday of the month Congregate Dine-in	(978) 575-0116
Petersham Luncheon Club Town Hall Petersham, MA 01366	Wednesday Congregate and Grab and Go	978-821-5549
Phillipston Luncheon Club 1st Congregational Church The Common Phillipston, MA 01331	1st & 3rd Tuesday of the month Congregate Dine-in Closed December to March	(978) 407-9504
Royalston Luncheon Club Town Hall Royalston, MA 01368	Wednesday Congregate Dine-in	978-249-8957

NQHC COVID-19 and Other Reportable Diseases

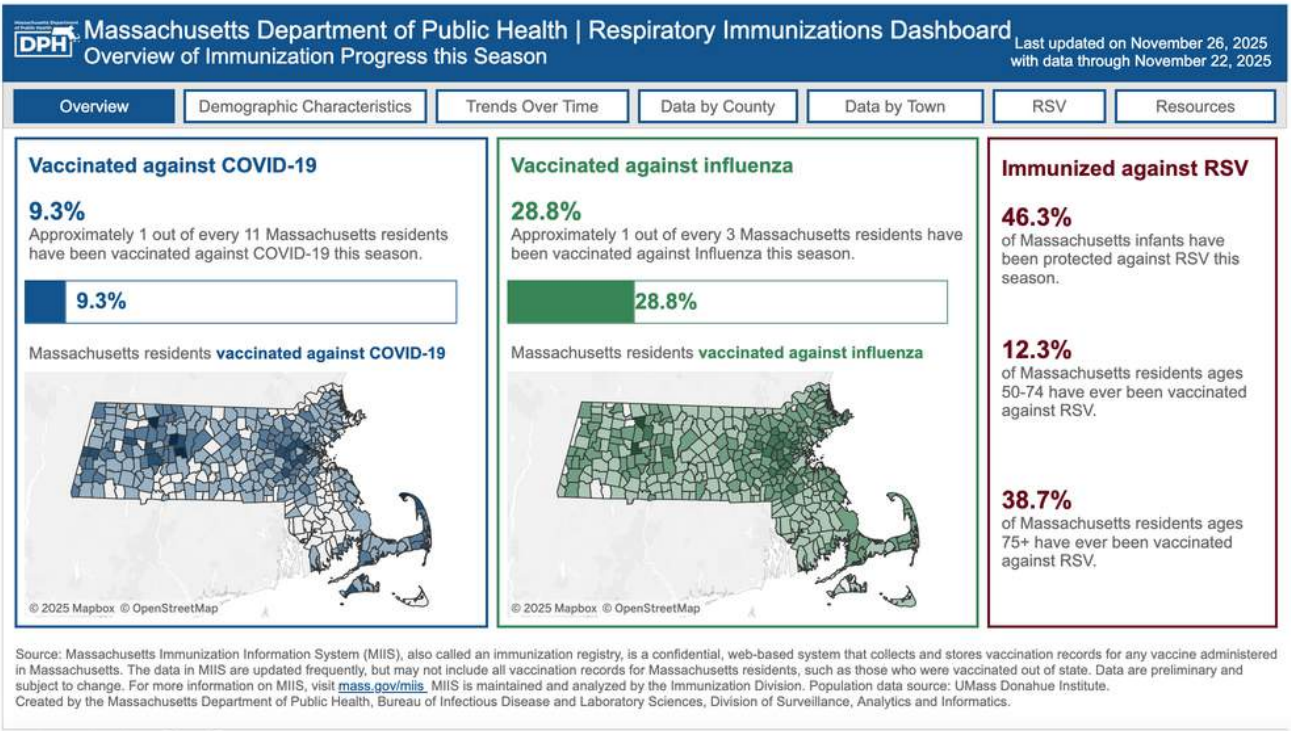
In the the one-week period of November 17th through November 23rd, 2025:

- 1 official cases of COVID-19 within the district
- 0 cases of influenza

Respiratory Illness Reporting

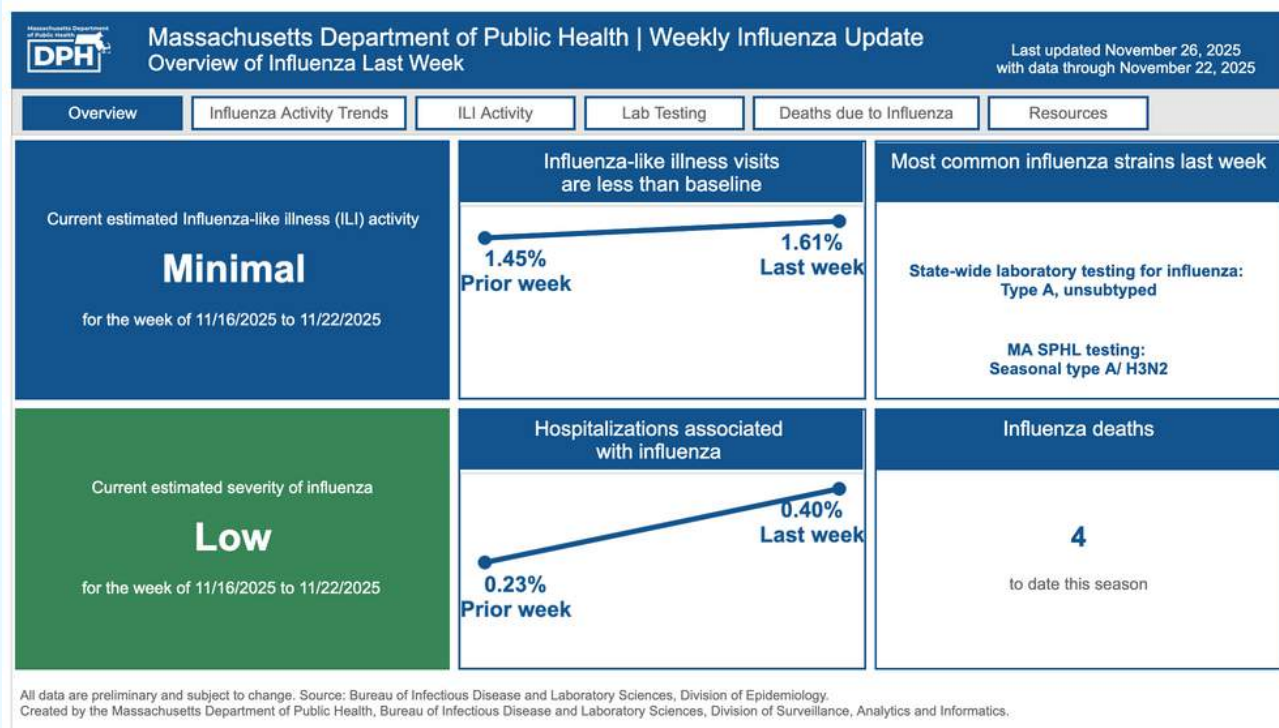


Here is the overall percentages if individuals in Massachusetts immunized against Covid-19 and Influenza

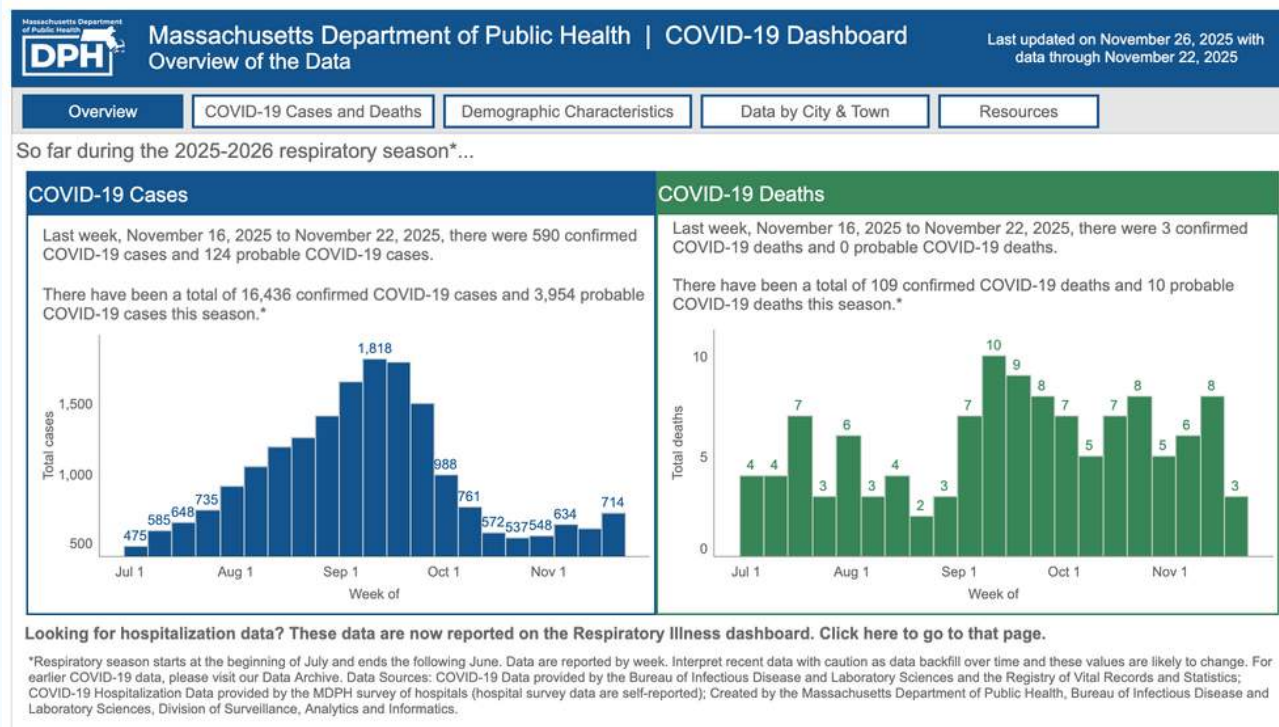


The Massachusetts Department of Public Health

Influenza Reporting – Influenza rate is still at Minimal and Severity is at Low



COVID-19 Reporting – Number of cases remains static



At this point in time there have been no additional updates to the Massachusetts Covid guidelines. The latest version can be seen at <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/staying-home-to-prevent-the-spread-of-respiratory-viruses>

Report created by Christy Page: cpage@townoforange.org
Next newsletter will be Friday December 5th, 2025

New Salem Public Library
and the New Salem Council on Aging

Senior Drop-In Hours

Wednesdays, 1:00 – 4:00 pm

Tea & Topics:

**“What’s New With the Flu
& Other Vaccination Updates”**

Dec. 3, 2:00-3:00 pm

“Tea & Topics” is a special program series during Senior Drop-In Hours on Wednesdays. Once a month, Samantha Piragis (Public Health Nurse for the North Quabbin Health Collaborative) will be joining us to share some health information in an informal setting with light refreshments.

Seniors are still welcome to spend time working on the ongoing jigsaw puzzle, looking for books, using the computers and printers, or just visiting with friends in the YA area of the library



New Salem Public Library
23 S. Main St., New Salem, MA 01355
978-544-6334 /n_salem@cwmares.org

