

Coronavirus Situation Awareness Report - March 13, 2020

Montague Board of Health Coronavirus Situation Awareness Report

PLEASE NOTE: This is a rapidly evolving situation. Risk of the Coronavirus to Massachusetts residents remains low. Infection numbers are likely to change. The Montague Board of Health will continue to provide updates and coordinate public messaging on the situation on a regular basis.

March 13 2020; Situation Report:

Recently, a new strain of Coronavirus - 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)-was detected in Wuhan, China. This novel Coronavirus causes a respiratory (lung) infection. This new virus is related to, but different from, other Coronaviruses that cause the common cold and diseases such as SARS and MERS. Common symptoms of COVID-19 are fever, coughing, shortness of breath and in severe cases, pneumonia (fluid in the lungs). Cases range from very mild to severe, with up to 2% of cases currently ending in death.

As of March 12th, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports there are over 1630 cases of COVID-19 in the United States with 46 states affected. Data include both confirmed and presumptive positive cases of COVID-19 reported to CDC or tested at CDC since January 21, 2020. This data does not include information on testing results of persons repatriated to the United States from Wuhan, China and Japan. States are now testing and publicly reporting their cases. In Massachusetts there is 105 presumptive positive cases and 18 confirmed case of COVID-19, none of which are in Hampden, Hampshire and Franklin County. It is presumed that we will see positive cases in our area in a short time, due to the increased availability of testing in our region.

On March 10th, 2020 Governor Baker issued a State of Emergency to Support Commonwealth's Response to Coronavirus.

The Town of Montague is taking additional measures to slow the potential spread of this disease. The following are examples of precautionary measures:

- Any event with a potential gathering of 25 people or more.
- Any event with a potential gathering of 25 or more people likely to attract groups who are at the highest risk, which includes seniors over the age of 60 or people with underlying health conditions.
- All professional development events inside the town in numbers greater than the above thresholds.

- Any event that cannot ensure 6 feet of space between attendees either needs to find a suitable space or make teleconferencing options available.
- Any employee who appears to be ill should be sent home and be given the option to work remotely until symptoms have resolved.
- Closing off the Municipal buildings to the public

Events that qualify for cancellation under the above order could include Town of Montague public meetings and hearings that would attract large groups of residents, indoor sporting activities, events at the senior center, public building uses by outside groups, or any other activities where large numbers of people gather for any reason.

How Best To Protect Yourself From Getting Coronavirus:

Currently the risk of contracting the Coronavirus in Massachusetts still remains low. Conversely, it is the season for respiratory illness, so the recommendations below on how best to protect yourself apply in both cases. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention is recommending personal preparedness and protective measures, including Personal Non-Pharmaceutical Interventions (NPIs). NPIs are measures taken to help prevent the spread of diseases that do not include medications. Currently, there are no medications or vaccinations available to prevent COVID-19, however, everyone should practice these respiratory illness prevention:

- diligent hand washing with soap and water
- avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands
- cover your mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing
- stay home from school, work and other people when you become sick with respiratory symptoms like fever and a cough
- avoid close contact (within 6 feet) of people who are sick
- routine cleaning and disinfection of high touch areas with EPA approved disinfectants

A Couple Other Things to Consider to Protect Yourself from Illness

- Increase the frequency of routine cleaning and disinfecting at home and your place of work. Especially consider those high touch areas such as; elevators buttons, door knobs, bathrooms, public facing counters
- Think about your excursions to shopping centers, restaurants, entertainment venues
- Wipe of carts, seats and hard surfaces
- Carry a 60% alcohol based hand sanitizer with you
- Think about packages that you receive from all over the world. Many use the internet to shop. Virus can live longer on certain surfaces, such as cardboard and plastic
- Consider limiting unnecessary travel

Notification of Illness:

If you are experiencing or receive a call or notice from someone experiencing respiratory symptoms who has recently traveled to China and/or has had exposure or possible exposure to an individual with COVID-19, encourage them to call their medical provider or notify the ambulance or emergency department before they go to receive care of their symptoms. This will allow medical staff to arrange for a visit that does not put other patients or staff at risk of infection.

Isolation and Quarantine (I&Q):

- Isolation refers to separating people who are ill from other people to prevent the spread of a communicable disease.
- Quarantine refers to separating and restricting the movement of people who have been exposed to a communicable disease and are not yet ill.

The Montague Board of Health may find themselves in the position of monitoring those in quarantine (individuals who may have been exposed to COVID- 19, but who are not showing signs of illness) and potentially enforcing quarantine in partnership with the Department of Public Health. Generally, quarantines are for 14 days, since that is the longest incubation period seen with similar Coronaviruses. In addition the Board of Health may be involved in monitoring those who are ill with

COVID-19 and who have been instructed to isolate themselves at home (i.e., those not needing hospitalization). Isolation periods will differ, depending on the length and severity of symptoms.

Questions? Please Contact Montague Board of Health # 413-863-3200
ext.205

