

Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency

MASSACHUSETTS EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY SITUATIONAL AWARENESS STATEMENT #1

Date: Saturday, March 7, 2020

Time: 9:30AM

Re: Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Informational Update

Situation

Coronaviruses are respiratory viruses and are generally spread through respiratory secretions (droplets from coughs and sneezes) of an infected person to another person. Symptoms of COVID-19 include fever, cough and shortness of breath, and, in severe cases, pneumonia (fluid in the lungs). According to the CDC, as of today, there have been 164 US cases of COVID-19 confirmed. Globally, more than 95,000 cases have been confirmed. There has been a total of 11 deaths in the US.

In an effort to facilitate and increase situational awareness, the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) will continue to communicate with the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) regarding the current outbreak of COVID-19 and provide a weekly update on the situation to local and state partners.

MDPH Strategic Actions and Guidance

Massachusetts Department of Public Health is taking a number of strategic actions to prepare for the novel coronavirus outbreak. Among them:

- Engaging in daily communications with the CDC, US Health and Human Services, and other federal and regional agencies to discuss the latest guidance and recommendations.
- Keeping public health partners including local boards of health, school health personnel, Emergency Medical Services, college and university health systems, and health emergency preparedness teams informed with the latest federal guidance and supporting state documents and materials.
- Continuing efforts by the Massachusetts State Public Health Laboratory staff to prepare to perform diagnostic testing for the virus, and epidemiologic staff to perform surveillance of potential cases and contacts, guide local health departments regarding returning travelers, and respond to questions from clinicians, health departments, and the public 24/7.
- Engaging Massachusetts hospitals and health systems leadership by providing clinical and infection control prevention guidance and supporting their surge planning procedures and protocols

- Disseminating detailed public health guidance and recommendations to school superintendents, charter school leaders, and principals throughout the Commonwealth
- Monitoring impacts to the supply chain of personal protective equipment such as gloves, face masks, and other equipment within the US and providing hospitals and health systems with strategies to optimize these supplies
- Instituting a streamlined organizational system for the outbreak (called an “Incident Command Structure”) to include briefings with state health leadership to facilitate information sharing, decision-making, and responses during a potential outbreak.
- Daily updating to a dedicated DPH website providing information on the COVID-19 status and resources including facts sheets in multiple languages: www.mass.gov/2019coronavirus.

DPH continues to work with local public health authorities in accordance with federal guidance regarding travelers returning to the US. This is part of routine public health practice and DPH will not be disclosing specific information in order to respect individual privacy.

Coronaviruses are respiratory viruses and are generally spread through respiratory secretions (droplets from coughs and sneezes) of an infected person to another person. Symptoms of novel coronavirus include: fever, cough and shortness of breath, and in severe cases, pneumonia (fluid in the lungs). Information about how this novel coronavirus spreads is still limited.

While the risk of the coronavirus to Massachusetts residents remains low, the risk for contracting influenza remains high and residents are urged to get the flu shot if they have not already done so. To prevent any virus, people are advised to take many of the same steps they do to help prevent colds and the flu, including:

- Wash hands often with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds.
- Cover coughs and sneezes.
- Stay home when feeling sick.

Attached, you will find information from MDPH on how to prevent the spread of respiratory diseases like the flu and COVID-19.

COVID- 19 Cases in Massachusetts

COVID-19 cases in Massachusetts as of March 6, 2020 (numbers updated daily by noon):

- Total confirmed cases of COVID-19: 1
- Total presumptive positive cases of COVID-19: 7

Massachusetts residents subject to COVID-19 quarantine as of March 3, 2020 (this information is updated every Wednesday by 10 a.m.):

- Total of individuals subject to quarantine: 719
- Total of individuals who have completed monitoring (no longer in quarantine): 470
- Total of individuals currently undergoing monitoring/ under quarantine: 249

For more information visit <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-cases-quarantine-and-monitoring>

COVID- 19 Interagency Planning Meeting

The Commonwealth held a COVID- 19 interagency meeting today to discuss planning efforts for a potential coronavirus outbreak in the Commonwealth.

Agencies represented/ invited to participate in this meeting included: *Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA), Department of Public Health (DPH) Office of Preparedness and Emergency Management, Executive Office of Public Safety and Security (EOPSS), Department of Fire Services (DFS), Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (CME), Massachusetts National Guard (MANG), Salvation Army, Department of Transportation (DOT), Massachusetts Port Authority, Massachusetts State Police (MSP), Department of Housing and Community Development (DCHD), American Red Cross (ARC), Department of Mental Health (DMH), Executive Office of Elder Affairs (EOEA), and Department of Environmental Protection.*

The meeting focused on the following topics:

- Situation overview (DPH)
- Community support:
 - Information sharing
 - Continuity of Community Services
 - Mass 211
- Contingency planning:
 - Social distancing
 - Housing
 - Wrap around services
- Logistics
 - Logistics/ supply chain
 - PPE
 - Procurement, prioritizations distribution
- Transportation

Although the threat level to Massachusetts remains low at this time, agency representatives discussed the need for ongoing public messaging and guidance to communities, coordination with local and state partners, and identified planning considerations at the state level to support communities in the event the situation escalates and communities become overwhelmed.

Going forward, the interagency planning group will meet every Friday. The next meeting is scheduled for March 13th at 10 a.m.

Statewide Conference Call

Discipline-specific conference calls will be scheduled for next week. MEMA will share details for those calls.

Stay Informed

In an effort to ensure you have good situational awareness and early guidance from DPH, all stakeholders and the general public are encouraged to visit the DPH website as updates and guidance changes frequently. The link for DPH website can be found here: www.mass.gov/2019coronavirus.

Planning Guidance

Below are hyperlinks from DPH's website that provide specific guidance and recommendations for: (1) emergency responders and law enforcement, (2) businesses and employers, and (3) elementary and secondary schools. To access the hyperlinks hold "Ctrl" and click the link.

- Guidance for [emergency responders and law enforcement click here](#).
- Guidance for [businesses and employers click here](#).
- Guidance for [elementary and secondary schools click here](#).
- Guidance for [colleges and universities click here](#)

Regarding continuity planning, employers should consider how best to decrease the spread of acute respiratory illnesses and lower the potential impact of COVID-19 in workplaces in the event of an outbreak by taking steps to:

- Reduce transmission among staff
- Protect people who are at higher risk for adverse health complications
- Maintain business operations
- Minimize adverse effects on other entities in their supply chains

All private and public sector agencies are encouraged to develop or update contingency plans to ensure they can continue to carry out essential functions regardless of the threat or impact. For guidance and more information on continuity planning visit <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/continuity-and-safety-planning-guidance>

This message has been sent from MEMA's Listserv.