

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, March 25, 2020

Update #1: Town of West Bridgewater Confirms First Cases of COVID-19

WEST BRIDGEWATER — Town Administrator David L. Gagne and Board of Health Agent Robert W Casper Jr. wish to provide the community with regular updates about the town's response to the ongoing COVID-19 emergency.

The Town has been notified by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) that two West Bridgewater residents have tested positive for COVID-19. The individuals are currently in isolation per DPH orders.

Close contacts (defined as someone who has spent more than 15 minutes within six feet of a positive case) have been identified, contacted by health officials, and are adhering to DPH guidelines for self-quarantine.

West Bridgewater Board of Health Officials are involved and will continue to closely monitor the individual. In order to protect the residents' medical privacy rights, no additional information will be disclosed.

COVID-19, the illness caused by the novel coronavirus, has been declared a Global Pandemic by the World Health Organization and has moved Governor Charlie Baker to declare a State of Emergency in Massachusetts and President Donald Trump to declare a National Emergency. With increased testing capabilities and community spread of COVID-19, having a positive case in town was extremely likely.

The Town of West Bridgewater and State and Federal Public Health Officials urgently encourage that all residents practice social distancing and remain at least six feet away from others while avoiding congregating in groups larger than 10.

Children and COVID-19

Parents should be sure to talk to their children about proper hygiene and prevention methods as well as the importance of social distancing until further guidelines are provided by state officials about the status of the virus.

- Families should not hold “play dates” and those in need of childcare should limit the number of families involved as much as possible.
- Practice social distancing techniques with children and have them practice among themselves.
- Clean and sanitize toys, video game controllers and all touch surfaces regularly.

Social distancing will help to minimize exposure among people, especially given that COVID-19 is highly contagious and people may be contagious prior to exhibiting symptoms.

As the weather continues to improve, outdoor gatherings are viewed as safer, but social distancing techniques should still be practiced. Walking in outdoor recreation areas in West Bridgewater is allowed, so long as social distancing practices are maintained.

Teens are included in this group, and activities like bike riding and hiking/ walking are viewed as safer alternatives to gathering indoors

Person-to-person spread

The situation is fluid and new information is being posted regularly by the CDC and the DPH. The CDC offers the following [guidance for how COVID-19 spreads](#):

- The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person.
 - Between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet).
 - Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes.
- These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or

possibly be inhaled into the lungs.

Can someone spread the virus without being sick?

- People are thought to be most contagious when they are most symptomatic (the sickest).
- Some spread might be possible before people show symptoms; there have been reports of this occurring with this new coronavirus, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.

Spread from contact with contaminated surfaces or objects:

It may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads. As a precaution, it is recommended that residents clean things that are frequently touched (like doorknobs and countertops) with household cleaning spray or wipes.

COVID-19 Information Resources

Information about COVID-19 can be found on the [DPH website here](#) or the [CDC's website](#). The DPH website is updated regularly with the latest guidance concerning COVID-19, including printable fact sheets in multiple languages.

Residents can also call 211 or visit <https://mass211.org/> to live chat to receive more information. For specific questions, call the DPH Epidemiology Line at 617-983-6800, available 24/7.

Additional updates will be provided as information becomes available.