



TOWN OF BEDFORD
97 MCMAHON ROAD
BEDFORD, MASSACHUSETTS 01730

Bedford Public Schools Update on COVID-19

June 5, 2020

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The Bedford COVID-19 Task Force met June 5, 2020 to review the latest guidance from the Department of Public Health (DPH), the office of Governor Charlie Baker, and Town Legal Counsel.

The COVID-19 Task Force is comprised of the following Town officials:

Sarah Stanton, Town Manager
Jon Sills, Superintendent of Schools
Heidi Porter, Director of Health and Human Services
Robert Bongiorno, Police Chief
David Grunes, Fire Chief
Taissir Alani, Facilities Director

Current Case Report

As of today, June 5, 2020, there have been a total of two hundred twenty-seven (227) positive cases of COVID-19 reported to the Town of Bedford Board of Health by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MA DPH), of those, one hundred twenty-one (121) are Bedford residents not living in a healthcare/long term care setting. Forty (40) deaths of Bedford residents have been attributed to COVID-19. The total case number includes residents of the Town of Bedford, including but not limited to those in: single-family homes, apartments, the VA campus, Hanscom Air Force Base, special needs group homes and any and all other larger assisted living/care facilities in Bedford as reported to us by the MA DPH.

As you may be aware, long-term care facilities serving the elderly and congregate care facilities, house susceptible populations with underlying conditions who are particularly vulnerable to COVID-19. Increased testing occurs at these facilities and results in more positive cases being identified. As such, cities and towns with these facilities, like Bedford, experience elevated positive case counts and, unfortunately, deaths due to the vulnerability to COVID-19 of the populations within those facilities.

Seventy-one (71) of the total Bedford cases have already recovered and have come off of isolation and there may other Bedford residents who would be considered persons under investigation in that they are symptomatic, have undergone testing but have not yet received results. There are other individuals impacted by COVID-19 in

the community that have not sought medical attention, and/or have not been tested and are isolating at home regardless. Those individuals do not appear on the surveillance reports the Town receives from the MA DPH.

The Board of Health continues to do the appropriate follow-up and outreach to those residents and close contacts known to us and the VA is conducting follow-up and contact tracing of the Veteran's under their care. Many of the identified close contacts of some of the Bedford cases never exhibited symptoms, have completed their required quarantine period and have been released from quarantine by the Board of Health.

Please note, in part to alleviate the community concern, the VA does do a daily report of their numbers, which includes inpatients, outpatients and staff, many of whom do not call Bedford home. The information can be found here: <https://www.accesstocare.va.gov/Healthcare/COVID19NationalSummary>

Phase 2 Reopening Plan

On June 1, 2020 the Governor provided an update which allowed businesses included in Phase 2 of the re-opening plan, to open their physical workplaces and facilities to workers for the purpose of preparing and planning for the re-opening. As occurred in Phase 1, all businesses will be required to comply with the General Workplace Safety Standards at all times, and specific sectors will have additional requirements.

The Board of Health staff are currently working on gathering all Phase 2 protocols and details as information is released by the State of Massachusetts. This information has already been shared with many sector specific businesses or programs (for whom we have contact information) in an effort to help them better understand the requirements that must be met prior to re-opening. This will support those entities included in Phase 2 to be prepared for reopening. It is expected that Governor will make an announcement tomorrow as to the start date for Phase 2.

Businesses or programs currently included in Phase 2 of the Reopening Plan include: retail stores, outdoor dining at restaurants, hotels, organized sports and youth programs, additional personal services, funeral home services, outdoor recreational facilities, day camps, and public libraries. These sectors will be allowed to open on a specific date in Phase 2 in a limited fashion or limited operations with specific conditions that must be met. Exciting news for the Town of Bedford, Phase 2 will allow town programs to re-open such as summer adventures, kids club and potentially some recreation programming! Additional information will be released as specifics are received from the State. If you are a business not currently receiving COVID-19 Reopening emails from the Bedford Board of Health please contact us at 781-275-6507 to be added to our contact list.

Mask and Face Covering Order – A Reminder

We know, it's hot, it's a pain, your glasses fog... but all residents over the age of two are required to use a face covering or mask in public places where maintaining proper social distancing measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 are not possible. This order applies to all workers and customers of businesses and other organizations that are currently open to the public and permitted to operate as COVID-19 Essential Businesses, such as grocery stores, pharmacies, and other retail stores. Residents are also required to wear a mask or face covering at all times when using any means of transportation service or public mass transit.

This order also applies outdoors if you cannot keep a safe distance from others. In practice, this means that, even if you are seeking some fresh air or exercise by going outside for a walk, run or bike ride in a place where you don't expect to see anyone else, you still need to wear a face covering. You can keep it around your neck if no one is around. But when you see someone else you should raise your face covering up over your nose and mouth while you are in the same vicinity. Navigate to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HtUJPizQVPI&feature=youtu.be> to see a DPH PSA on How to Safely Cover Your Face Outside of Home.