



TOWN OF BEDFORD
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BEDFORD, MASSACHUSETTS 01730

Bedford Public Schools Update on COVID-19

May 6, 2020

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The Bedford COVID-19 Task Force met May 6, 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, May 6, 2020, there have been a total of one hundred and forty-six (146) positive cases of COVID-19 reported to the Town of Bedford Board of Health by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MA DPH) and twenty-three (23) deaths of Bedford residents 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.

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and MA DPH, long term care and congregate care facilities house susceptible populations, potentially with underlying conditions, who are at high risk for infection, serious illness, and death from COVID-19. Additionally, increased testing frequently occurs at these facilities which results in more positive cases being identified. As such, cities and towns with these type of facilities, like Bedford, experience elevated positive case counts and, unfortunately, deaths due to the vulnerability to COVID-19 of the populations within those facilities.

In addition to the 146 positive cases of Bedford residents reported today, the MA DPH has attributed an additional sixty-six (66) positive cases to Bedford, of persons who are not residing in Bedford. These additional positive cases are either: 1) employees of a Bedford facility, who when tested for COVID-19, attributed their

“location” to Bedford, when in fact they have residency in another community; or 2) people who, when tested, listed Bedford as their “location” and actually live in and are being followed in another community/state (included in this group are former residents who have moved and/or are living in long term care facilities out of town). The Bedford Board of Health refers these cases to the applicable Board of Health for follow-up in the town where the person actually resides and have requested that the MA DPH remove these names from our surveillance database.

Twenty-nine (29) of the total Bedford cases have already recovered and have come off of isolation and there are currently no known Persons Under Investigation. 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>

Slow the Spread

To continue to do our part to slow the spread, it is imperative that Bedford residents strictly adhere to the following personal hygiene and protective practices:

- Wear a face covering in public. Residents over the age of two must 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 statewide order is in effect as of today, May 6th and supersedes previously issued guidance relative to mask use. 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.
- Abide by social distancing requirements and keep 6 feet away from others.
- Stay home except for necessary, essential and allowable errands.
- Don’t touch your face.
- Engage in frequent handwashing for 20 seconds.
- Use sanitizer on your hands, if not near a sink.
- Regularly sanitize common-touch surfaces.

We need everyone to comply with these practices to have timely success in overcoming this epidemic. We understand that this is hard, but it only works if we are all diligent all the time. Please pitch in and be compliant so we can get to the other side of this outbreak.