



Town of Harwich Board of Health

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Hello Harwich residents,

This is a very important public health update about the coronavirus that is spreading rapidly and now present in Harwich.

This virus is spread through the air from respiratory droplets contained in a person's breath, sneezes and coughs. A person can become infected by having close contact with someone who has the disease. Close contact includes being within 6' of someone for a prolonged period of time. Another way to contract COVID-19 is indirectly through frequently touched surfaces that have been contaminated. The virus is able to live on surfaces for several days and can be transferred by touching the surface with your hands and then touching your face or an item that will be put in your mouth.

Some people can carry the disease and not show any symptoms or even know they have it. It is still possible to spread the disease to others during this time. Until we are able to provide more testing options, it is vital to maintain social distancing and frequent handwashing for this very reason.

As of March 20, 2020, there are 413 confirmed cases and 1 death in Massachusetts due to COVID-19, the disease caused by the coronavirus. In Harwich, there are currently 2 confirmed cases and many people are under self-quarantine due to being a close contact of a confirmed case.

As the days and weeks of testing continue, I expect more cases in our Town. I understand the innate desire to know who and where the positive cases are, however this is private medical information and does not change the precautions each of us are currently taking. Whether it is a neighbor or a stranger you passed inside the grocery store, my advice to you is the same: keep 6' from each other, wash your hands often and if you are sick stay home. If you develop symptoms of COVID-19, stay home and call your doctor who will advise you of further instructions.

If you are in need of emotional support during this stressful time, call 2-1-1 or visit www.mass211.org. More information is provided on this rapidly changing public health emergency on the town's website at www.harwich-ma.us.

Thank you for doing your part to slow the spread of coronavirus. We, as your Town leaders are taking steps to limit person to person interactions by closing municipal buildings to the public. Together we can make a difference, take care of yourself and each other.

Meggan Eldredge, your Health Director