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Health Advisory for Coronavirus (COVID-19)

February 27, 2020

The Belmont Health Department is sharing updated information with the community to help keep it informed about the emerging global health concern, the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19). This is a new strain of Coronavirus that may cause respiratory illness in some people.

The Belmont Health Department continues to monitor the latest information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH). Belmont Health Department staff is in regular contact with MDPH and has been informed that the risk for COVID-19 continues to remain **LOW** with one confirmed case of COVID-19 in Massachusetts.

At this time the Belmont Health Department is following public health guidance provided by the CDC and MDPH, which may include the monitoring of individuals who may be quarantined at home as needed. Town officials will continue to monitor the situation and implement CDC and MDPH guidance at the local level. As this situation continues to evolve, if any special instructions are provided, the Belmont Health Department will communicate them to the community.

Here are some things you can do:

Keep yourself and others healthy

- Wash your hands with soap and water, for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating, and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands
- Stay home when you are sick
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash



Know the facts (and help prevent the spread of rumors)

- Be sure you are using a reliable source for your information
- CDC updates its website frequently with information and guidance about COVID-19: www.cdc.gov/nCoV
- CDC continues to provide updates for travelers at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>
- MDPH provides regular updates for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts: <https://www.mass.gov/2019coronavirus>
- The Belmont Health Department will post community wide advisories on the Town of Belmont's home page if there is a change in risk level: www.belmont-ma.gov
- Face masks are not recommended for the general public at this time.
 - Face masks can be useful in some settings, such as a clinic waiting room, to prevent someone who has a respiratory illness from spreading it to others.
- Cancelling public events is not currently recommended as the risk for COVID-19 remains **LOW** in Massachusetts.

Please continue to remain calm and open-minded

- History has seen many instances of societies excluding, blaming, or devaluing those feared to have an unfamiliar disease. Recent examples include Ebola, HIV, and past influenza pandemics where fear led to stigma and discrimination. In many instances, the discriminatory actions caused the health problems to worsen as those who felt alienated avoided seeking out health care and information they needed. We encourage you to continue to remain calm.

Questions?

If you are experiencing a medical emergency, please call 911. When calling 911, please remember to notify dispatch of any possible COVID-19 symptoms or exposures.

You should contact your healthcare provider for all medical and health related concerns.

All other questions may be directed to the Belmont Health Department at (617) 993-2720.