



OFFICE OF THE TOWN ADMINISTRATOR

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March 16, 2020

Dear Residents:

Here is the latest update on the coronavirus/COVID-19:

The State has set up a coronavirus helpline. Please call 2-1-1 with questions and for the latest updates.

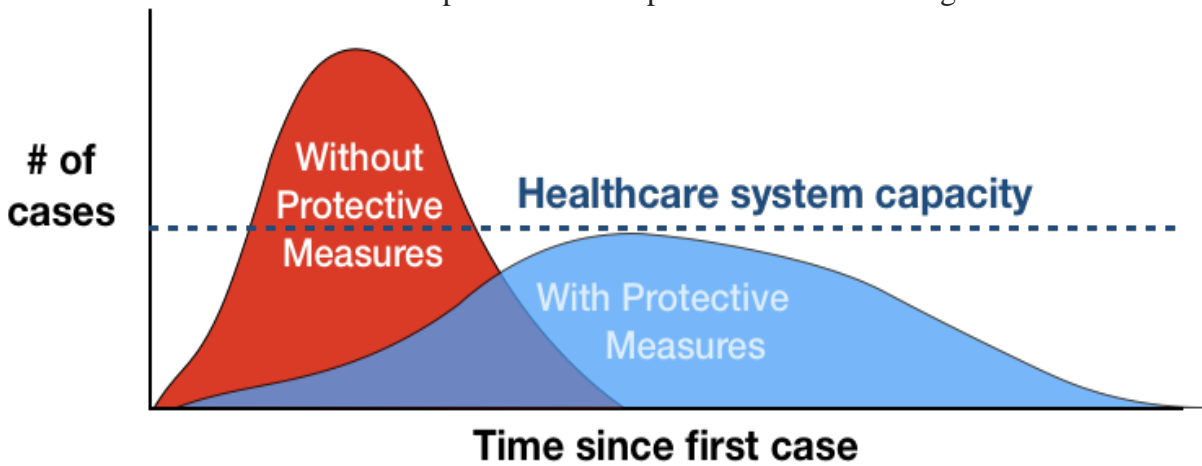
Local government officials in Massachusetts were invited to a conference call on Sunday. Professor Alex Vespignani, Northeastern University, studies the spread of epidemics and pandemics. He provided the following information:

- The coronavirus/COVID 19 is a new strain that has never been previously seen in humans. Because it is new, humans have no prior exposure which would give us protective antibodies;
- The most susceptible population is the over 65 population;
- Younger populations are less susceptible to infection; however, they are capable of transmitting the virus to others. This is of particular concern to young people visiting grandparents and other at-risk populations;
- The virus spreads exponentially at a rate of 2 to 2.5 times. That is, every infected individual infects two others, each of them infects two others, and so on;
- Due to this exponential growth, the number of cases doubles in roughly 3-5 days;
- The situation in Italy tells the story:
 - February 26: 380
 - March 11: 10,600
 - March 15: 20,000 +
- Massachusetts is expected to reach 1,000 cases this week; it will likely double in 3-5 days. Italy's experience should be expected to repeat in Massachusetts. It is projected Massachusetts will have more than 10,000 cases by April 1;

What is being done? The only way to address the virus is to act collectively. A town by town approach will be ineffective. The Governor's decision on Sunday, March 15, to order the closing of schools, limit gatherings, and other measures will help;

- You may have heard the phrase "flatten the curve."
 - Without intervention, the number of cases will spike. In a short time the majority of the population will be infected. When that happens, the number of cases will overwhelm the capacity of the health care system. Therefore, some will suffer from the lack of care;

- Intervention flattens the curve so the number of cases is within the health care system's ability to manage the load. The duration is longer, but the outcomes are better. This is what public health experts are recommending.



Adapted from CDC / The Economist

Governor Baker held a press conference Sunday evening. Some highlights from that:

- All public and private schools in Massachusetts are ordered closed for three weeks, from Tuesday, March 17 through April 7. Tri-Town and Masconomet are already closed through March 27; this closure will be extended through April 7;
- All restaurants and bars in the State are prohibited from serving on premises. Restaurants may only serve take-out and delivery. Restaurants that do not currently serve take-out or delivery may do so now;
- The prior restriction on gatherings of 250 or more has been modified to gatherings of 25 or more;
- Grocery stores and pharmacies are exempt, but are expected to manage their crowds;
- There is NO shelter in place order;
- As of Sunday, March 15, there are 164 cases in Massachusetts; one day before there were 138;
- 799 people have been tested. There is capacity now to test 400 people per day in Massachusetts.

Please be safe and help in minimizing the spread of the coronavirus pandemic.

Sincerely,

Andrew J. Sheehan
Town Administrator