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PRESS RELEASE

Five New Presumptive Positive Cases of COVID-19 Identified by Massachusetts State Public Health Laboratory

CDC to conduct additional testing to confirm these cases; Massachusetts Department of Public Health begins daily online reporting of cases, which now include eight – one confirmed, seven presumptive positive

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

3/06/2020

Department of Public Health

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BOSTON — The Massachusetts Department of Public Health today announced five new presumptive positive cases of COVID-19 since testing started Friday, February 28, at the State Public Health Laboratory, bringing the total number of confirmed or presumptive positive cases to eight. All five of these new cases are tied to an employee meeting of a multi-national company with headquarters in Massachusetts that took place in late February. The cases include two women and one man from Suffolk County, all in their 40s; and two individuals from Norfolk County, one woman in her 30s and one man in his 40s. All five individuals are at their homes.

The State Public Health Lab’s result is considered “presumptive positive” and the specimens will now be sent to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for confirmation.

The risk to the general public from COVID-19 remains low in Massachusetts.

Including the cases announced today, Massachusetts has eight total cases: one confirmed case and seven presumptive positive cases. The one confirmed case is [a Suffolk County man in his 20s](/news/man-returning-from-wuhan-china-is-first-case-of-2019-novel-coronavirus-confirmed-in) who returned from travel to Wuhan, China, and is recovering at home. There are seven presumptive cases: The five cases announced today, along with two previously-reported presumptive positive cases. Those previously reported cases are [a Norfolk County woman in her 20s](/news/first-presumptive-positive-case-of-covid-19-identified-by-massachusetts-state-public-health) who recently returned from an organized trip in northern Italy, and [a Middlesex County woman in her 60s](/news/second-presumptive-positive-case-of-covid-19-identified-by-massachusetts-state-public-health) whose recent international travels included northern Italy. All of these cases are recovering at home.

Beginning today, the Department of Public Health is providing daily updates of confirmed and presumptive positive cases at [mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-cases-quarantine-and-monitoring](/info-details/covid-19-cases-quarantine-and-monitoring).

As of Wednesday, 719 people have been subject to [self-quarantine](/info-details/covid-19-quarantine-and-monitoring#covid-19-cases-in-massachusetts-) in Massachusetts because of COVID-19. Of those, 470 people have completed monitoring and are no longer quarantined, while 249 are currently quarantined. This information is updated online each Wednesday.

The CDC has [updated its Travel Health Alert](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers) for all United States residents, instructing travelers returning from countries with a Level 3 alert (currently China, South Korea, Iran, and Italy) to stay home and monitor their health for 14 days after returning to the US. This guidance also instructs travelers from countries with a Level 2 alert (currently Japan) to monitor their health and limit interactions with others for 14 days after returning to the US. The guidance advises against any non-essential travel to Level 3 countries.

Out of an abundance of caution, Governor Charlie Baker and Health and Human Services Secretary Marylou Sudders have urged strongly all schools including colleges and universities, and elementary and secondary schools to cancel any organized international trips.

Yesterday, the Department of Public Health sent a formal request to the US Department of Health and Human Services to request additional Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) from the Strategic National Stockpile.

Coronaviruses are respiratory viruses and are generally spread through respiratory secretions (droplets from coughs and sneezes) of an infected person to another person. Symptoms of COVID-19 include fever, cough and shortness of breath, and, in severe cases, pneumonia (fluid in the lungs). Information is still limited about how this novel coronavirus spreads. More information on COVID-19 is available at [mass.gov/2019coronavirus](/guides/information-on-the-outbreak-of-2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19).

According to the CDC, as of today, there have been 164 US cases of COVID-19 confirmed. Globally, more than 95,000 cases have been confirmed. There has been a total of 11 deaths in the US.

Although the risk of the novel coronavirus to Massachusetts residents remains low, and the risk of the flu is high, people are advised to take many of the same steps they do to help prevent colds and the flu, including:

- Wash hands often with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds.
- Avoid touching your eyes and face.
- Clean things that are frequently touched (like doorknobs and countertops) with household cleaning spray or wipes.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or the inside of your elbow.
- Stay home when feeling sick.
- Stay informed.
- Get a flu shot.

Clinicians who have patients they think may have symptoms consistent with COVID-19 must contact DPH via the 24/7 EPI line (617-983-6800).

Individuals who are in voluntary self-quarantine continue to be monitored by their local boards of health.

People who have recently traveled from an area with [widespread or ongoing community spread](#) (https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=https-3A__www.cdc.gov_coronavirus_2019-2Dncov_about_transmission.html-23geographic&d=DwMF-g&c=IDF7oMaPKXpkYvev9V-fV) of COVID-19 and who have symptoms of the disease (fever, cough, shortness of breath) should reach out to their healthcare provider and call ahead before going to a healthcare facility.

For more information on COVID-19 visit [mass.gov/2019coronavirus](#) (/guides/information-on-the-outbreak-of-2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19).

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