



News Release

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Man returning from Wuhan, China is first case of 2019 Novel Coronavirus confirmed in Massachusetts

BOSTON (February 1, 2020) – The first case of the 2019 novel coronavirus in Massachusetts has been confirmed in a man returning from Wuhan, China who is in his 20s and lives in Boston. The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) and the Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC) were notified by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) of the positive test results late Friday evening. This is the eighth case of infection with 2019 novel coronavirus reported in the United States. The risk to the public from the 2019 novel coronavirus remains low in Massachusetts.

The man recently traveled to Wuhan, China, and sought medical care soon after his return to Massachusetts. He has been isolated since that time and will continue to remain isolated until cleared by public health officials. His few close contacts have been identified and are being monitored for any sign of symptoms.

“We are grateful that this young man is recovering and sought medical attention immediately,” said **Massachusetts Public Health Commissioner Monica Bharel, MD, MPH**. “Massachusetts has been preparing for a possible case of this new coronavirus, and we were fortunate that astute clinicians took appropriate action quickly. Again, the risk to the public from the 2019 novel coronavirus remains low in Massachusetts.”

“Our priority is not only to protect and inform the residents of Boston but also to help this man continue to recover. We are pleased that he is doing well,” said **BPHC Executive Director Rita Nieves**. “Right now,

we are not asking Boston residents to do anything differently. The risk to the general public remains low. And we continue to be confident we are in a good position to respond to this developing situation.”

DPH and BPHC continue to work closely with the CDC to maintain vigilance during this virus outbreak.

The novel coronavirus has resulted in thousands of confirmed human infections in more than 20 countries, with more than 99 percent of cases in China. To date, eight cases have been confirmed in the US: three people in California, two in Illinois and one individual each in Massachusetts, Washington State, and Arizona.

On Friday, US Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar declared the 2019 novel coronavirus a public health emergency and ordered any US citizens returning from the center of the outbreak in China to be quarantined for two weeks as a precaution. This followed a declaration Thursday by the World Health Organization that the coronavirus outbreak is a Public Health Emergency of International Concern. Also that day the CDC reported the first case of person-to-person transmission in Illinois between household members.

Massachusetts state health officials, in conjunction with Massport, local health departments, and other medical partners, have responded to prevent the spread of the virus.

Among the steps taken by the Department of Public Health:

- Established an Incident Command Structure to facilitate regular dissemination of information from federal and state partners to statewide stakeholders.
- Launched a new [website](https://www.mass.gov/2019coronavirus) that provides up-to-date information on the status of novel coronavirus for all residents: <https://www.mass.gov/2019coronavirus>.
- Developed and disseminated clinical advisories to all Massachusetts health care providers and issued guidance to hospitals, health systems, and Emergency Medical Services.
- Scheduled calls with other key health care partners including local boards of health.

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 novel coronavirus include fever, cough and shortness of breath, and, in severe cases, pneumonia (fluid in the lungs). Information about how this novel coronavirus spreads is still limited.

Although the risk of the coronavirus to Massachusetts residents remains low, 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.
- Cover coughs and sneezes.
- Stay home when feeling sick.

Clinicians who see patients with recent travel in China, especially Hubei Province, who have a fever, lower respiratory tract symptoms (such as shortness of breath and cough), and/or contact with a known

novel coronavirus patient, should contact DPH 24/7 at (617) 983-6800 for assistance. In Boston, providers should contact BPHC at 617-534-5611.

The new DPH website provides relevant up-to-date information on the state of the novel coronavirus for all residents: mass.gov/2019coronavirus.

Additional details and guidance regarding the novel coronavirus, is available from the CDC: [2019 Novel Coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2019/novel-coronavirus.html).

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