



TOWN OF OAKHAM Board of Health

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Over the last week, we have observed cities and towns throughout the Commonwealth publicly announce case numbers of Covid-19 in their community. The Massachusetts Department of Public Health advised us today that going forward this practice must not continue. For many reasons, but in part due to reports of cyberbullying and privacy violations. **To be clear, the Oakham Board of Health will make no public announcement should Oakham have a resident with Covid-19.** *With the exception of providing confidential emergency dispatch notification of a positive result at a specific address, to insure responding emergency personnel can take the necessary precautions.*

On March 16 2020, the Oakham Board of Health held a joint meeting with the Board of Selectmen. It was determined that we needed to take a proactive and coordinated approach and declared a local Declaration of Emergency. The Chiefs of Police and Fire were present as well the Emergency Management Director. All parties have remained in regular communication and are monitoring the evolving situation; including ensuring our first responders have all necessary Personal Protective Equipment. More details of the specific Oakham response steps are on our website, which can be located at <http://oakham-ma.gov/>. We have a current inventory of available PPE and as a result have already distributed additional resources, where needed. Additionally, on March 19th the BOH, coordinating with our Board of Selectman and Emergency Management team, applied for and received a first installment of grant funds to support our efforts to manage our local public health response, supporting the financial procurement of supplies, nursing and other services.

The local public health management of an infectious illness is a centuries old practice, involving when appropriate home quarantine, isolation, and public health nursing support. Should we, the Oakham Board of Health receive notification from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, that one or more of our residents has tested positive for the Corona virus (COVID-19) we will act within the guidance from DPH and CDC. The Board of Health Chair, Aaron Langlois, RN (acting Public Health Nurse) will work closely with the patient and will among other responsibilities, notify others who may have been in contact with them and take further actions as necessary, which may include advising them of the requirement to be monitored, quarantined, and or isolated as each case dictates.

As always, to reduce risk for any infection, please take all necessary infection control precautions.

- **Wash your hands often** with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds.
- **Avoid touching** your eyes, nose and mouth.
- **Clean things that are frequently touched** (like doorknobs and countertops) with household cleaning spray or wipes.
- **Cover your mouth** when you cough or sneeze. Use a tissue or your inner elbow, not your hands.
- **Stay home if you are sick** and avoid close contact with others.

If you have any questions, consult <https://www.mass.gov/Covid19> or Town of Oakham Covid-19 information at <http://oakham-ma.gov/> or you can reach out to aaron.langlois@oakham-ma.gov.

Aaron Langlois, RN, MBA
Oakham Board of Health, Chair

Steven Labarre
Oakham Board of Selectmen, Chair