



Massachusetts General Court

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
(Gordon)

CONTACT: Cody Case, 617-722-2575

Rep. Gordon shares update regarding COVID-19 outbreak

Representative Ken Gordon (D-Bedford) joined his legislative colleagues and Massachusetts Health and Human Services officials Tuesday on a conference call to discuss the Commonwealth's response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. Following this discussion, he issued an update for Burlington, Bedford, and Wilmington residents.

Rep. Gordon asks constituents to do their part to combat the spread of COVID-19 by taking social distancing measures. Residents should remain at least six feet away from others, avoiding congregations of more than 25 people, and preventing exposure to all those who are medically compromised or elderly.

"We are working hard to address these issues and ensure that we get through this crisis safely, but we will need everyone to remain vigilant and follow the guidance of experts for the common good. These are tough times for sure, but working together, we will get through it." **said Gordon.**

Rep. Gordon shared the following information regarding the COVID-19 outbreak in Massachusetts and the State's response:

- As of this writing, 256 Massachusetts residents have tested positive for COVID-19, out of over 2200 individuals tested at state and commercial labs.
- The Governor issued an executive order Wednesday that requires the temporary closing of all early education and childcare centers. These facilities must close within five days. Certain emergency child care programs will continue to operate in order to provide care for the children of healthcare professionals, first responders, and other essential workers.

- Simon Property Group announced the closing of the Burlington Mall beginning Wednesday and ending March 29;
- The Administration is conducting outreach to laboratories and universities to increase access to test kits and the labs that can analyze those tests. Representative Gordon is working directly with a testing lab in their district and the Administration to increase the State's testing capacity. Discussions are ongoing and further updates will be provided as soon as possible;
- On Wednesday, the Legislature passed Governor Baker's emergency legislation eliminating the one-week waiting period for unemployment benefits to begin for those whose employment is affected by COVID-19;
- Governor Baker issued an order expanding coverage for telehealth services. The order is not limited to COVID-19 related cases. It includes mental health diagnosis and treatment as well as physical health treatment covered by MassHealth, Group Insurance Commission (GIC) and private insurance carriers. Residents should contact their healthcare provider before traveling for necessary medical appointments;
- The Governor and Legislature have made emergency loans immediately available to small businesses (50 employees or less) to compensate for lost revenue and sales. This is not limited to restaurants and bars, and includes certain non-profits. Information is available at www.empoweringsmallbusiness.org/. The Governor also issued an executive order postponing payment of taxes for small hospitality and restaurant business through May;
- The Department of Children and Families is operating a 24/7 Care and Custody question line for those fostering or sheltering children. Families with questions about care hearings, health insurance, and more should contact their case worker to find out departmental changes;
- The MBTA Commuter Rail will reduce schedules to incorporate extra time needed for decontamination, as are the various subway lines. Bus routes and subway lines will be operating on Saturday schedules. Route information for all forms of transit may be found at www.mbta.com/covid-19;

- Those with expiring licenses or learners permits up until April 30th are automatically approved for a 60-day extension. Vehicle registrations are not approved for extension however, and must be filed electronically at www.mass.gov/rmv;
- All visits to Massachusetts correctional facilities for family and friends have been suspended. Phone calls up to 30 minutes will be allowed by inmates to home. Visitation suspension does not apply to lawyers; and
- Anyone who has trouble securing necessary medical equipment, or encounters a shortage at a pharmacy when seeking equipment for a preexisting condition should contact Representative Gordon's office. The Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency has infrastructure in place to help assist individuals and pharmacies facing shortages of needles and other medical equipment to those with preexisting conditions to ensure their health.

Residents with additional questions are urged to contact either Representative Gordon's office by phone at 617-722-2575 or his email Kenneth.Gordon@mahouse.gov. While his office is following remote work procedures, Rep. Gordon or his staff will respond to inquiries as soon as possible.

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