

From: [Mayor Bernard](#)
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MARCH 12, 2020, CORONAVIRUS UPDATE FROM THE CITY OF NORTH ADAMS AND NORTH ADAMS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

NORTH ADAMS, MA (March 12, 2020) – The City of North Adams and the North Adams Public Schools (NAPS) continue to monitor the rapidly changing situation around the COVID-19 (Coronavirus) pandemic. Superintendent of Schools Barbara Malkas and I want to assure all residents, employees, and community members that city and school district staff are actively managing the situation in concert with local, state and federal health officials.

We urge everyone in the community to continue to practice commonsense personal measures to prevent the spread of germs and viruses. These practices include recommendations to wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, avoid touching your eyes and face, and cough or sneeze into a tissue or your elbow. In addition, please follow the recommendation to stay at home if you are feeling sick, and contact your primary healthcare provider if your symptoms worsen.

This is a fast-moving and rapidly changing situation. On Tuesday, Governor Baker declared a state of emergency in Massachusetts which includes many recommendations for executive branch state employees. We also are seeing many large events canceled locally and nationally, both in the public and private sectors in order to help contain the spread of the Coronavirus.

City and school district staff continue to meet regularly, in person and via conference call; we are connected with state and local public health officials, as well as with other local civic and school leaders, to ensure we are clear and consistent in our communications and aligned in our response plans.

On Tuesday, Superintendent Malkas informed school district staff of the following measures that will be in effect through April 17:

- All school events will be cancelled or rescheduled for later in the school year.
- All field trips will be cancelled or rescheduled for later in the school year.
- All staff will be prohibited from travel to events, seminars, workshops, or professional development outside of the county.

Today, I am announcing the following additional protective measures for public events and City staff, building on what is in place for school staff. First among these is that we have instituted enhanced cleaning procedures at all public buildings. As part of this response plan, and in line with other communities, we will close the Mary Spitzer Senior Center on Friday, March 13, to allow staff to conduct a deep cleaning of the center before it reopens on Monday, March 16.

With regard to public events, effective immediately and for the next 30 days we are canceling all events hosted by the city, or involving city staff that meet any of the following conditions:

- Any event with a potential gathering of 100 people or more. This includes the city's 125th anniversary activities, planned for April 24-25, which will be postponed to a later date.
- All professional development events and meetings outside Berkshire County, or within the County in numbers greater than the above thresholds.
- Any event that cannot ensure 6 feet of space between attendees either needs to find a suitable space or make teleconferencing options available.

Additionally, any employee who appears to be ill should be sent home and be given the option to work remotely until symptoms have resolved.

I am not making this announcement lightly. I know this will present challenges for those organizing and planning public events, especially events that involve youth in our community. Every situation is unique, if you have questions about any of the above guidelines and the impact on your department feel free to reach out to the Health Department.

I encourage other organizations in the city to consider following the city's example. Our health and public safety departments continue to safeguard public health, and we all have a part to play in supporting them in these efforts. Additional information will follow as we receive it.

Thank you again for your concern and support as we work to "flatten the curve" of the Coronavirus pandemic and ensure that our public health providers and facilities have the time and the capacity to respond to this evolving challenge.

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