



CITY OF NORTH ADAMS, MASSACHUSETTS

Office of the Mayor  
**Thomas W. Bernard**

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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contact: Michelle Ells  
Email: [mells@northadams-ma.gov](mailto:mells@northadams-ma.gov)  
Phone: 413-662-3000

### **MARCH 15, 2020 CORONAVIRUS UPDATE AND FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

NORTH ADAMS, MA (March 15, 2020)

Friends,

In some ways it is hard to believe we issued the first community update about the COVID-19 Coronavirus just one week ago. In that time, we have all been through a period of extraordinary change. We all have added new phrases to our vocabulary, like “abundance of caution,” “flatten the curve,” and “social distancing.”

So as we end this extraordinary week and begin a new one, many of us are wondering “What’s next?” In some ways the answer is “more of the same.” We will continue to take action on the facts as we understand them in order to protect public health and safety.

As I have noted before, we are all sharing the experience of doing our best to respond to a situation that is changing quickly. The means we may learn that the plans we made this week with the best information available to us will need to change next week. As things change I will continue to provide regular updates with the most complete and accurate information available, including the frequently asked questions that follow this message.

Thank you. Take care of yourselves, and take care of each other.

Mayor Tom Bernard

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## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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### **WHAT'S OPEN? WHAT'S CLOSED?**

The following city buildings are closed to the public

- North Adams City Hall
- The North Adams Public Schools
- The North Adams Public Library
- The Mary Spitzer Senior Center
- The Peter W. Foote Vietnam Veterans Memorial Skating Rink

My team and I did not easily make the decision to close public buildings to the public. They, and I, did so out of concern for the health and wellbeing of residents and visitors, as well as of our city staff. Preventing the spread of COVID-19 involves reducing the gathering of individuals in public settings.

For that reason we strongly encourage community members to do business with the city by phone (413-662-3000) or online whenever possible. However if you have pressing in-person business we will work with you to accommodate your needs. We'll also be sharing information about how to access library services while the building is closed to the public.

### **HOW WILL STUDENTS ACCESS SCHOOL MEALS WHILE SCHOOLS ARE CLOSED?**

Beginning Monday, March 16, a grab 'n go lunch and breakfast will be available for students, Monday through Friday, from 11:00 am to 12:00 pm. Meals will be provided via a drive through pick up at Colegrove Park Elementary School and Brayton Elementary School. A bag lunch will be provided along with a dry breakfast for the following day. There will be no dinner service.

### **WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP?**

First and foremost, please continue to take all precautions to help prevent the spread of infection. Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Avoid touching your eyes and face. 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.

Build a network of support. Reach out to check on your neighbors. Offer to go shopping for an older neighbor. Recommend your favorite TV show or book to pass the time.

Continue to practice self-care. We are better prepared to take care of others when we take good care of ourselves.

Support local businesses, while continuing to practice safe social distancing. For example, order a gift card now to use later. Remember that we are only as healthy as the community around us. Please be mindful that events may be cancelled/postponed as a way of safe and keeping vigilant for the health of friends, family, and loved ones.

And above all, please follow the recommendations about social distancing. The more people can avoid gathering in public spaces the more we can do to slow the spread of the Coronavirus. This is incredibly important because when we are successful in slowing the spread of the pandemic, we are helping to keep our healthcare system from getting overwhelmed. It's also important because people who are out in public may be able to spread the virus even if they are not (yet) experiencing symptoms themselves.

It's not easy, but we all have a role to play.

### **WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO PRACTICE 'SOCIAL DISTANCING?'**

- Avoid crowded public spaces
- Maintain your distance from others (6 feet or 2 meters away).
- Limit use of public transportation

### **WHERE DO I GO FOR CURRENT, RELIABLE, ACCURATE INFORMATION?**

The following sites continue to provide timely and accurate information, recommendations, and updates:

Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH)	<a href="https://www.mass.gov/resource/information-on-the-outbreak-of-coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19">https://www.mass.gov/resource/information-on-the-outbreak-of-coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19</a>
Mass 211	<a href="https://mass211.org/">https://mass211.org/</a>  Calling 211 connects callers to information about critical health and human services available in their community.
The National Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)	<a href="https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html">https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html</a>
Berkshire Health Systems	<a href="https://www.berkshirehealthsystems.org/body.cfm?id=4261&amp;fr=true">https://www.berkshirehealthsystems.org/body.cfm?id=4261&amp;fr=true</a>  855-BMC-LINK, or 855-262-5465. The information line is available 7 days a week, from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.
MassHealth	<a href="https://www.mass.gov/coronavirus-disease-covid-19-and-masshealth">https://www.mass.gov/coronavirus-disease-covid-19-and-masshealth</a>

## WHAT RESOURCES EXIST TO HELP MY BUSINESS?

1Berkshire	<a href="https://1berkshire.com/news/covid-19-response/">https://1berkshire.com/news/covid-19-response/</a>
Mass.gov	<a href="https://www.mass.gov/info-details/small-business-assistance-for-covid-19">https://www.mass.gov/info-details/small-business-assistance-for-covid-19</a>
Common Capital Fast Track Loan Program	<a href="https://1berkshire.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Common-Capital-Fast-Track-Loan-Program-Flyer-March-2020.pdf">https://1berkshire.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Common-Capital-Fast-Track-Loan-Program-Flyer-March-2020.pdf</a>
Small Business Administration (SBA)	<a href="https://www.sba.gov/disaster-assistance/coronavirus-covid-19">https://www.sba.gov/disaster-assistance/coronavirus-covid-19</a>