



CITY OF NORTH ADAMS, MASSACHUSETTS

Office of the Mayor
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MARCH 18, 2020, CORONAVIRUS UPDATE FROM THE CITY OF NORTH ADAMS

NORTH ADAMS, MA (March 18, 2020)

Friends,

I want to begin this today's message with thanks and compliments to the North Adams Fire Department who responded to a late night structure fire on Union Street last night. Our first responders rose to the challenge as they always do: with professionalism, dedication, and concern for life and safety. Their efforts helped ensure that 18 of our fellow North Adams residents emerged safely from the building, and were provided with shelter thanks to Pastor Anderson and the First Baptist Church.

This is a reminder that the business of our city goes on, even as we respond to and prepare for the effects of the Coronavirus on our community and on the people of North Adams. The 18 people who have been displaced from their homes join other vulnerable people in our community who have significant and growing needs that COVID-19 will only make more pressing. The work of our community liaisons is helping to identify resources and needs, make connections, and ensure we have a single, clear, coordinated response. The more we can do this, the more quickly and effectively we can respond to the needs of individuals and organizations in these rapidly-changing circumstances.

I know that many people have help to offer, and want to step up to meet the needs of our community; the team at the COVID-19 operations center and I ask that you direct requests and offers of assistance through the community liaisons at 413-662-3614 or nbcovid@gmail.com.

As we talk about supporting others I want to reiterate the point I made the other day about the importance of self-care, and to add another recommendation in that area today, courtesy of Massachusetts Health and Human Services Secretary MaryLou Sudders, who said "take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories, including social media." While it's

important to stay connected and informed the constant inflow of information can be overwhelming, and stressful.

Similarly, it's impossible to overstate how important it is to follow social distancing recommendations. While the weather is nice and it's tempting to connect with family and friends, even if we feel well, many people who have COVID-19 will get through it only experiencing slight symptoms, but still are at risk of passing the virus to others, including vulnerable relatives, friends, and community members. That's what being contagious means: the closer we are to each other physically the more likely we are to infect somebody else. Social distancing helps protect everyone in our community.

Below I have included some new information from the governor's update this afternoon, as well as news about supporting local businesses.

Mayor Tom Bernard

State updates

Today, Governor Baker signed a [bill](#) to waive the one-week waiting period for unemployment benefits as a result of COVID-19. Thank you to Representative Barrett and Senator Hinds for helping to fight for this support for our local workforce. Information on unemployment and COVID-19 can be found online here: <https://www.mass.gov/resource/information-on-unemployment-and-coronavirus-covid-19>.

The governor also ordered the closure of all child care facilities effective Monday, March 23, with exemptions for family of emergency personnel, medical staff and "others critical to fighting the COVID-19 outbreak." Exempt Emergency Child Care Programs will be the only child care programs able to operate during the COVID-19 outbreak. Families who work to maintain the health, safety, and welfare of all Commonwealth citizens will receive priority access to emergency childcare programs and these centers should only be used by people who must go to work. Vulnerable children will also receive priority access and space will be made for people who must go to work but aren't necessarily emergency personnel. You can read the governor's order here: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/march-18-2020-early-education-and-care-order>.

The Baker-Polito administration also announced today a tax relief plan for small local businesses which have been impacted by COVID-19, especially in the restaurant and hospitality sectors. Eligible businesses will be allowed to postpone the collection of regular sales tax, meals tax, and room occupancy taxes that would be due in March, April and May so that they will instead be due on June 20, with all penalties and interest waived.

Supporting local businesses

We know that many local businesses are struggling along with the rest of us, including many local restaurants. If you want to support a local restaurant while following the governor's order prohibiting onsite consumption at bars and restaurants, this list includes information about restaurants that offer delivery and/or takeout: <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1VyN5WgfcIffUqKHA5wAuuuYKFmE3sosjz6hE2sSpnkE/edit#gid=0>.