



# Town of Danvers

## Office of the Town Manager

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Jen Breaker | Assistant Town Manager & Communications Director  
1 Sylvan Street, Danvers, Massachusetts 01923 | p: 978-777-0001 | f. 978-777-1025  
[www.danversma.gov](http://www.danversma.gov) | [jbreaker@danversma.gov](mailto:jbreaker@danversma.gov)

Contact Jen Breaker, Asst. Town Manager  
Phone 978-777-0001x3003  
Email [jbreaker@danversma.gov](mailto:jbreaker@danversma.gov)  
Website [www.danversma.gov](http://www.danversma.gov)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## A LETTER FROM DANVERS TOWN MANAGER STEVE BARTHA Preparing for Coronavirus in our Community

Danvers, MA – I am writing this letter to you as your Town Manager, but I am also a resident, a parent, and a husband who, just like many of you, feels at times confused and overwhelmed by what is happening right now as a result of the Coronavirus outbreak.

Like you, I have many more questions than answers right now about what all of this means, and that is likely to remain the case for a while, but you should know that your local leaders are meeting daily to discuss the latest available information and guidance from State and Federal Agencies, public health professionals, the CDC, and the World Health Organization.

We will do our best to get the right information out at the right time, but I can promise that some of our residents will find it to be either too slow, too fast, too much or not enough.

As of today, there is one presumptive case of Coronavirus in Danvers; there are probably more undetected cases here already, as is likely the case in many towns and cities. Salem had its first confirmed cases reported in this morning's Salem News.

We need to take this seriously, and we are, but we also should not panic. There are simple, scientifically validated steps and actions we can take to ensure that when the

virus does impact someone we know, our local healthcare professionals will have the capacity to receive presumptive patients and treat them accordingly.

According to the CDC, the three most common symptoms of Coronavirus are:

1. Fever
2. Cough
3. Shortness of breath

Our collective responsibility right now is to “flatten the curve” of infection, which basically means slow down the spread of the virus. Experts from Harvard and the CDC have predicted that, eventually, anywhere from 20% to 60% of the general population will become infected, recognizing that 80% of infections result in minor/invisible symptoms. For some, however, the disease presents a serious threat – especially (according to the CDC) for those 60 or older or who have “comorbidities,” like heart disease or diabetes.

Again, our job right now is to slow the spread, so that doctors and nurses can treat patients in manageable numbers that do not overwhelm our systems.

The steps we need to take start with good personal hygiene and social distancing. Simply put, social distancing means avoiding unnecessary interaction with others to reduce the chances of catching or spreading a virus.

The health of our residents and employees is priority number one. To that end, both Danvers Public Schools and Town Offices will be closed from Friday, March 13<sup>th</sup> until Friday, March 20<sup>th</sup>. We will still be in the background providing public safety, public health, public utilities (water, sewer, electric), and some social services, like food delivery and grab-and-go lunch bags for students in need.

If it becomes clear by next week that lengthier closures are necessary, we will communicate that widely prior to Friday, March 20<sup>th</sup>.

To stay informed, you should consider signing up for emergency notifications on the Town website: <https://danversma.bbcportal.com/>, or follow the Town on Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram (@townofdanvers), or go to the Town’s Public Health webpage: <https://www.danversma.gov/departments/health-department/>.

A skeleton crew will be in Town Hall to answer the phones (978-777-0001), but the building will be locked. The Selectmen’s Budget Hearing scheduled for Saturday, March 14<sup>th</sup> is being postponed to a future date.

A quote I’ve seen circulated a few times in the past couple of days basically says that before a crisis, everything we do to prepare seems like overkill, and after the crisis everything we did feels insufficient.

As parents, we've decided to pull our kids from lessons for a while, at least until we know exactly what we're dealing with, we are going to avoid crowds whenever possible, we are washing our hands regularly, we are monitoring ourselves closely for symptoms that would indicate that a trip to the doctor makes sense, we are making sure prescriptions are filled and that our pantry is stocked, but we are also not panicking and are doing our best to adjust to a new normal for a while.

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