

COVID-19 Update from the Sharon School Department & Town Officials (audio version):

Dr. Victoria Greer, Superintendent of Schools: Good morning Sharon Community thank you for tuning in and listening to us today I have with me Chief Wright of the Sharon Fire Department and the director of Emergency Management for the town of Sharon, I also have Sheila Miller who is our Public Health Nurse for the Town of Sharon, and Karen Waitekus who is the Nurse Lead for the Sharon School Department. I'm Dr. Greer and I am the Superintendent of Schools. Over the past 24 hours to school department and the health department have been alerted by the Massachusetts Department of Health that there is an individual in the Sharon Community who's been tested for the COVID-19 virus and at this moment the results are presumptive positive. This individual and their family have self-quarantined. It has also come to our attention that multiple members of the individuals family either work for and/or attend the Sharon Public Schools. On March 5th, the individual who tested with a presumptive positive result, attended the 11th grade moving up ceremony at Sharon High School. Persons who attended that were in the immediate area or had direct contact with this person have already been notified. It is presumed that the risk for potential exposure is extremely low. Those who attended should pay very close attention and monitor yourselves for flu-like symptoms. Just to reiterate some of the things that I shared in my community update on Saturday (March 7th), over the past three weeks the school department has started to implement precautionary sanitation measures in all of our schools and in all of our transportation vehicles. As a precautionary measure, this weekend we did a deep sanitizing and disinfecting of all school buildings. Therefore, the Sharon High School building and any and all buildings in the school district had a deep sanitation on this Sunday afternoon. As shared in my letter on Saturday, we have and are continuing to plan for any potential long-term School absences or school closures as a result of the COVID-19 virus we will continue to take direction regarding school closures from the Massachusetts Department of Health and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. We do not anticipate that there is a need to close any schools at this time. We understand that the community is extremely concerned about your personal health and safety, however, we ask that you follow the direction and guidelines that have been shared by the Center for Disease Control including washing your hands and things of that nature. Also that you have if you have questions rather than consulting one another that you consult with your physician and/or the Sharon Health Department or the Massachusetts Department of Health. At this time I will turn it over to Chief Wright or any of the others on the panel if there's anything else that we need to add.

James Wright, Fire Chief & Emergency Management Director: Thank you Dr. Greer. Just a quick update in regards to ambulance services for the community. We are operating as per normal. We are obviously paying close attention to the patients that we transport, we're doing additional cleanings and for any patient with flu-like symptoms (we transport) we are

decontaminating the ambulance before we put it back in service. If anybody has been potentially exposed or think that they do have the (COVID-19) virus we asked that when you call 911 for an ambulance, you just advised us that you believe there's a possibility that you have the COVID-19. Again the likelihood is very small, however, we will take some additional precautions. Just a quick couple updates in regard to the (COVID-19) virus. It is very similar to a flu-virus and most normal healthy people will have simple flu-like symptoms of a fever/cough things like that. They'll move through the virus in in a similar manner as a flu so it's not time to panic it's time to do good hygiene practices. As things develop on a daily/hourly occurrence we will address all those things that come forward and provide all the information out to the community in as timely process as we possibly can. We don't want to give false information so we really look at the information we receive before we forward it out to the community to make sure we don't cause any (release of) inappropriate information and I'll pass it to the Public Health Nurse to just tell us what the guidance from the Department of Public Health is in regards to advising the general public and even quite frankly the fire service the school department of cases that come up through. There is protected health information that we cannot violate (release) in regard to information received.

Sheila Miller, Public Health Nurse: Okay thank you, Sheila Miller public health nurse, just to reiterate what Chief Wright said when I do receive either a suspect case, which I've had I've not had suspect cases, but this is the first one where they met the criteria. The Department of Public Health is in contact with me 24/7. The (presumptive-positive) notification was done yesterday (Sunday March 8th) afternoon and that's when we found out. People need to look at this as the risk is very low, use good hand-washing and to just use common sense. If you have any questions please refer to the CDC website or call the Department of Public Health or call the Sharon Health Department and we will try to answer your question. But to reiterate with Chief Wright said, this is ever-changing what we need to do. I'll give an example yesterday I was on the phone with an epidemiologist asking questions about some guidelines and they weren't quite sure because it is ever-evolving and at this point the risks to the community is extremely low. We're still getting cases of flu and there's still time to get flu vaccine so if you haven't done that please come to the health department and we can provide that for you. But again I just want to emphasize that the risk is really low and when you look at information please go to the CDC or Department of Public Health Website for current and accurate information. Thank you.

Dr. Victoria Greer, Superintendent of Schools: Again thank you so much, if you received my letter, which is also posted on our district website, there is a link to a form for which you can submit any questions and or concerns that you may have. These questions and concerns will inform (be included in) our ongoing updates to the community. Thank you.

Note: This is a synopsis of the Sharon Cable TV program and has had some very minor modifications to provide the most clear and accurate information.