

Read on to find;

- A Note of Update on COVID-19 advocacy and response
- Information about sponsoring groceries for seniors and other opportunities to serve
- Resources for continued learning and advocacy

Dear friends and neighbors of the 15th Suffolk/Norfolk district,

Many have reached out about the COVID-19 pandemic. Times are dire and yet ripe with opportunity to learn how better to respond to crises as a community. At the end of this note, we've compiled some volunteer opportunities and resources. We will continue to update you throughout the coming weeks

As you may have heard, Massachusetts Governor Baker recently closed all schools across the state and **instituted a number of measures** to help us keep each other safe. There is still a lot of work to be done on the legislative front.

Our office has been in regular communications with medical professionals and scientists in our district, as well as local government colleagues with public health expertise. We understand that while our statewide response is picking up, we have not yet gone far enough to prevent a series of cascading crises.

Closing schools, bars, and dine-in restaurants, and canceling public gatherings of 25 or more people have been necessary steps but are not sufficient. **Each of us has to do our part by sheltering in place when possible, maintaining 6-feet of distance in public, avoiding mass transit, and looking out for those who may be isolated or otherwise harmed by reduced access to wages, food, or other resources.**

Local officials are working together, inside and across our municipalities and districts. State and local task forces, delegations, and caucuses are meeting regularly to determine the scale of our response, from daycare to sick leave pay to courts to incarceration facilities. We are working on legislation to provide for lost wages, missed rents and mortgages, and business losses.

State House leadership and Mayor Walsh have been responsive to our office and others as we've passed on concerns from constituents like you and experts in the fields of infectious disease and emergency response. **Your advocacy has been critical. Here is a partial list of your recommendations that we've shared and seen implemented or planned for in recent days.**

- **Forcefully urge passage of the Families First Coronavirus Response Act TODAY**

- **Immediate closure of all public and private schools**
- **Guidance that all residents should shelter-in-place as much as possible**
- **Guidance that mass transit be used only if unavoidable**
- **Legislation providing relief to families and businesses losing income (in process)**
- **Emergency plan for food and day care access for students and families in need**
- **Moratorium on evictions, foreclosures, and utility cutoffs (in process)**
- **Guidance for safe outreach to isolated elders and individuals, including homeless**

In addition, a new hotline has been put in place: **Information on the Outbreak of COVID-19. Residents can call 2-1-1 to learn more about:**

- 1) COVID-19 prevention, symptoms, and treatment
- 2) Information about testing
- 3) Guidance for people planning or returning from travel

Massachusetts 2-1-1 is open to callers 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Operators fluent in Spanish are available, and more than 150 other languages are supported through an interpreter services line that is also available 24/7. In addition, Congresswoman Pressley, the MA congressional delegation, and other leaders are working to secure federal funds and legislative support for individuals, families, and businesses.

There is still more to do. For many of us this represents a learning curve of significant difficulty. But together we can do it!

We recognize the nature of this crisis requires measures that disproportionately impact poor and working class residents, elders, communities of color and immigrant families of mixed status. Please continue to help us understand how to better serve you and your neighbors. And continue to do what you can.

Our office will continue monitoring the situation and will keep you informed as we learn more. **Meanwhile, below are some of the resources we've found especially helpful or informative. We encourage you to share your own resources and tips online and in your communities.**

Yours in service,
Rep Nika

Opportunities to Volunteer
(we will continue to update this throughout the coming weeks)

- **Sponsor 15th Suffolk/Norfolk seniors: Contribute donations to purchase food and supplies for our elders in need;** Venmo Krista your donation (@kmagnuson) & she'll buy Stop-n-Shop gift cards on your behalf. We'll deliver them to our four public housing developments and beyond as needed over

the next four weeks. Don't have the Venmo app? You can drop off Stop & Shop giftcards of \$25+ to Rep Nika's house, but email nika.elugardo@mahouse.gov to make sure she's home! Rep Nika lives at 32 Sheridan Street #1 in JP.

- **Violence in Boston** sign up for Meal Relief Volunteering
- **JP Centre/South Mutual Aid**
- **Meal Sites** for kids in Boston
- **Age Strong Commission**
- Things to Do At Home (**Keep Roslindale Quirky FB page**)
- **MBTA Schedule Announcements**

Understanding the pandemic and how to individually respond

- **Telephone Town Hall** w/ Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley
- Councilor Michelle Wu's **COVID-19 Update** which includes a video of her question-and-answer session with infectious disease epidemiology expert, Professor Marc Lipsitch, and behavior recommendations to slow the spread of COVID-19.
- CDC's Recommendation for **Mental Health and Coping During COVID-19**; Contents include things you can do to support yourself and information for parents and first responders.
- **Boston COVID-19 Community Care Resource**; includes over 50 Boston-area resources like COVID-19 Financial Solidarity and Therapy Resources and Referral Sources.
- **Information on the Outbreak of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)**: The Massachusetts Department of Public Health is working closely with the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to provide updated information.

Selected Public Policy responses, recommendations, and supporting research

- **Families First Coronavirus Response Act**: Federal Legislation currently before the Senate, passed Friday, March 13th, 2020 by the U.S. House of Representatives.
- MA State Representative and public health professional Tami Gouveia's **nightly update** and research **memo**; contents include Recommendations to Slow the Spread of COVID-19 Infection, Recommendations to Mitigate Healthcare System Impacts, and Recommendations to Meet Our Residents' Needs in the Face of COVID-19. Memo compiles helpful research about Infection Rate and Testing, Impacts on Education System, Economy and

Employment Impacts, Food Access, Housing Security, and Stigma and Discrimination.

- **Open letter** to government officials from infectious disease and public health experts.
- **Letter from Mass Nurses' Association's** recommendations for mitigating the potential hazards of COVID-19 from the "perspective of frontline health care workers."
- The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's **Press Release on Education and Health Commissioners Issue Guidance on School Closures Related to Coronavirus**; includes immediate steps schools must take and guidance for coronavirus-related situations school districts may encounter. The **Department of Public Health** continues to post updated information online at www.mass.gov/covid19, and the **Department of Elementary and Secondary Education** continues to do so at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/emergencyplan/covid19.html>.

You can reach the office at **617-777-2582**, or isabel.torres@mahouse.gov!

You can follow us on social media on **Facebook**, **Twitter**, and **Instagram**.

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