

Town of Southwick Board of Health and Select Board COVID-19 Update for August 20, 2020

As of Thursday, August 20, 2020, there have been 69 positive cases of COVID-19 in the Town of Southwick. The Southwick Board of Health would like to stress that this is not a complete profile of the status of COVID-19 in the Town of Southwick. This number reflects those individuals who have received positive test results and *not* those awaiting results, untested symptomatic individuals, and those who might currently be asymptomatic. Additional information on case numbers can be found at <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-cases-quarantine-and-monitoring>.

State public health officials announced this week that influenza immunization will be required for all children 6 months of age or older who are attending Massachusetts child care, pre-school, kindergarten, K-12, and colleges and universities. The new vaccine requirement is an important step to reduce flu-related illness and the overall impact of respiratory illness during the COVID-19 pandemic. While this announcement applies to school-aged individuals, public health officials stress the importance of seasonal influenza vaccination at any age.

On August 7, Governor Charlie Baker announced a new set of initiatives aimed at stopping the spread of COVID-19 in Massachusetts. These initiatives included stricter statewide rules for public and private gatherings, targeted community guidance, and free COVID-19 testing sites in 17 communities. The updated gatherings order, which went into effect Tuesday, August 11, reduces the limit on outdoor gatherings from 100 to 50 people (indoor gatherings limit will remain at 25 people), applies these limits to all types of gatherings, on both public and private property, and requires face coverings where more than 10 people from different households will be mixing. Additionally, restaurant rules have been updated to state that alcoholic beverages may only be served for on-site consumption if accompanied by orders for food prepared on-site.

Effective August 1, 2020, all visitors and returning residents entering Massachusetts must follow [new travel orders](#). All travelers arriving to Massachusetts – including Massachusetts residents returning home – are instructed to complete the [Massachusetts Travel Form](#) prior to arrival and to self-quarantine for 14 days, except travelers from Connecticut, Vermont, New Hampshire, Maine, New York, and New Jersey. All persons are instructed not to travel to Massachusetts if they are displaying symptoms of COVID-19. For more information, including the most current list of lower-risk states, exemptions, business guidance and other details, please visit <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-travel-order>.

The Town Hall north side lobby is open to the public for Town Clerk, Treasurer, Collector, and Assessors services. All other offices are available by phone, on-line, and by appointment. All efforts have been made to ensure that customers and staff are kept safe. The Town of Southwick asks all visitors entering the building to abide by all posted signage.

Due to the recent increase in cases of COVID-19 in Massachusetts, residents are urged to continue to follow all public health precautions for reducing the spread of COVID-19: stay home unless absolutely necessary; if you must go out in public, practicing social distancing and proper hygiene etiquette; wear face coverings when inside retail stores and when social distancing cannot be maintained; and if you are experiencing signs of illness - fever, cough, shortness of breath – call your primary care provider for advice.

The Southwick Board of Health and Select Board continue to post case numbers and updated information regarding COVID-19 every week at southwickma.org. For additional up-to-date information please visit mass.gov/2019coronavirus and cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov. For non-emergency information and assistance, please call 2-1-1 or visit mass211.org.