Hospitals and Urgent Care Remain At the Ready for All Health Needs

A reminder that the region’s hospitals and urgent care centers remain at the ready to address the needs of all chronic and acute illnesses as well as necessary treatment for COVID-19 symptoms, with safety protocols in place to protect patients presenting with needs different than COVID-19 symptoms. It is admirable to wish to not burden the healthcare system, and understandable to wish to avoid exposure to the coronavirus, but these concerns should not come at the cost of your overall health and wellbeing. If you are experiencing issues with a chronic or acute illness, injury, or are experiencing symptoms indicating COVID-19, please access healthcare!

Below you will find links speaking to the efforts and protocols of Franklin County’s closest hospitals, as well as a Public Safety Announcement regarding this topic from the state.

Baystate Franklin Medical Center:
https://www.baystatehealth.org/covid19

Cooley Dickinson Hospital:

PSA Video from the Boston Healthcare System:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IWITRR50WZ4

Maintaining Patience with Physical Distancing

MA residents have been engaging in physical distancing for several weeks now, and we encourage you to stay patient and resilient during this time. Health and government leaders indicate that we may be approaching the peak of current COVID-19 cases in the Commonwealth, but “peak” does not mean “over”. Too quick of a release to the physical distancing practices we are engaging in will prolong the outbreak and expose you and your loved ones to greater risk.

Physical distancing strategies are not a “switch” that we turn on and off, but rather a “dial” that we will adjust in intensity as needed throughout the coming year. We should be prepared for physical distancing practices to let up slowly and in a layered manner, and also be prepared to quickly move back to more intense physical distancing measures if the Commonwealth sees spikes in cases as various restrictions are lifted.
We will learn more about the virus, which could help to identify the most effective layers of physical distancing strategies to keep the spread down in the Commonwealth. Please maintain a commitment to common-sense physical distance from large groups, as well as a commitment to common surface disinfecting, cloth face coverings to protect those around you from coughs and sneezes, and vigorous handwashing.

**Contact Tracing to Expand Within the Commonwealth**

Although physical distancing has helped to slow the spread of the virus, there is more that we can do, and that’s where you can help. Through what’s called “contact tracing”, public health nurses and other trained staff are reaching out to those individuals in the Commonwealth who have tested positive and people who have been in contact with anyone who tests positive for the coronavirus. With contact tracing in place, we can track the spread and reduce additional exposure to others by encouraging testing, supporting quarantine and physical distancing. Many people who have COVID-19 don’t show any symptoms and don’t realize that they may be spreading the virus.

When your community’s public health nurse or staff from the MA COVID Contact Tracing Team calls, you can do your part by answering the phone and providing helpful information that will help flatten and reduce the curve in Massachusetts.

When called for contact tracing, the case investigator will ask you for a list of all of the people you were within six feet of during the two days before you had symptoms. If you don’t have symptoms, they will ask about your activity during the two days before your diagnosis. They will also ask for the phone numbers of anyone you tell us about, so they can be called and told about their exposure, but will not tell them your name.

Your information is strictly confidential, and will be treated as the private medical record it is; your information will not be shared with other agencies, including immigration officials. Your participation will help protect you, your loved ones and your community by helping to shut down virus exposure points before they happen.