

# TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

## MARCH 2, 2021

### **1. COVID-19 UPDATES FROM THE HEALTH DIRECTOR -**

This week marks the one-year anniversary of the recognition of the first case of COVID-19 in Massachusetts. We are currently following 13 confirmed cases in Dennis, which has now moved into the State's "yellow community" risk category. There were 41 new cases reported in Barnstable County yesterday, bringing the total in the County above the 10,000 mark with just over 400 fatalities. Sadly, the Barnstable County Case Fatality Rate (CFR) is at 4%, second only in the State to Berkshire County, which has a Case Fatality Rate of 5.4%.

The 3-day average hospitalizations have fallen to 17, representing an improvement over data reported last month, at which time the 3-day average was in the mid-60s. ICU patient numbers have also fallen, with only 2 patients reported in intensive care at this time. On Monday, both CCH and Falmouth Hospital re-open their doors for limited visitation.

Vaccination efforts continue across the State and the County at this time for eligible individuals in Phase I and Phase 2. This includes all Phase 1 eligible individuals as well as individuals in Phase 2 who are age 65 or older, individuals with 2 or more comorbidities and residents and staff of low-income senior housing. Approximately 50,000 appointments were made available to individuals in these eligible groups at mass vaccination sites last week with an additional 20,000 doses available for administration by pharmacies in the State of MA last week as well. The total number of first dose vaccinations in MA as of February 25, 2021 was 1,111,829. The State reported that as of February 16, 2021, approximately 15.1% of residents in Barnstable County had received their first dose of vaccine.

Over the weekend, a third vaccine, most commonly referred to as the J&J vaccine was authorized for emergency use by the US FDA. As you are likely aware, this vaccine protocol requires administration of only one dose instead of two and has less stringent storage requirements. All three vaccines, Pfizer, Moderna and J&J, will be made available by the Federal Government to all communities based on population, as has been the protocol used in the past for Federal distribution of vaccine.

On Thursday, February 25, 2021, the Governor's Command Center announced 11 new Regional Collaboratives to support and streamline vaccine distribution in the State as more vaccine becomes available from the Federal Government, including one such arrangement in Barnstable County. With resources from the County Health Department and Cape Cod Healthcare, a high through-put vaccine clinic will be established at the 4 C's campus, capable of administering no less than 750 Massachusetts residents per day, no less than 5 days per week depending on vaccine availability. This clinic will be in addition to the existing regional clinics currently operating under the direction of the County at strategic sites across the Cape. These regional sites will continue to operate, concentrating on administration of second doses over the next few weeks, and later on administration of additional first doses as more vaccine becomes available.

In partnership with LBOH, Community Health Centers, and the County, CCHC has established a Regional Vaccine Consortium, which will address vaccination of some of the Cape's most vulnerable population. Using the newly established site at 4 C's, CCHC will proactively be reaching out to and scheduling appointments for these identified individuals at the 4 C's site. In addition, the Regional Vaccine Consortium is also working with LBOH, and OCHS with support from Councils on Aging, Police and Fire, to organize out-reach to homebound individuals requiring vaccination.

Veterans currently enrolled in the VA Health Care System can now receive the COVID-19 vaccine from the Federal Government. Current CDC guidelines will be followed to determine risk level for infection. A VA Health Care Staff member will contact eligible veterans, age 65 years or older by phone or mail to schedule vaccination based on their risk level.

Effective yesterday, the State amended existing re-opening Orders moving "all communities" into Phase 3, step 2 of the State's re-opening plans. Businesses in all communities were permitted to re-open in a variety of sectors with up to 50% capacity with a 500-person maximum. In addition to an increase in capacity limits, the updated Orders from the State also include some changes in restaurant operations as well. A complete list of business subject to this change as well as guidance for operators can be found on the State's website at [www.mass.gov/reopening](http://www.mass.gov/reopening).

On March 22nd, subject to continued positive trends in public health data, Massachusetts will move into Phase 4, Step 1. Effective on that date, gathering limits will increase for public event venues and public settings to a 100-person limit for indoor events and a 150 person limit for outdoor events. Gathering limits for private residences will remain the same at 10 persons for indoor gatherings and 25 persons allowed at outdoor gatherings at private homes. More details regarding the re-opening plans and guidance for operators can be found on the State's website at [www.mass.gov/reopening](http://www.mass.gov/reopening).

Finally, as we have heard in the news, there are four variants of concern, two of which have now been identified in samples obtained in Massachusetts. All appear to be significantly more transmissible than the virus which dominated the first wave of the pandemic. As we continue to move forward with vaccination efforts, residents are reminded that vaccination is not an alternative to the other public health measures in place. We urge continued adherence to CDC guidelines and State Orders regarding the wearing of face coverings, social distancing and travel.

Kristen Keller  
Health Director

## **2. FLOOD RATES**

FEMA is working to better price flood risk at the individual property level to more accurately reflect the risk of today's climate through the forthcoming "[Risk Rating 2.0](#)" initiative, which will set new premiums for properties both inside and outside of Special Flood Hazard Areas (SFHA) based on their individual flood risk. First Street Foundation's report highlights the impact that climate change and a risk-based approach could have on individual homeowners.

This report is discussing the potential for insurance changes due to the implementation of Risk Rating 2.0 (RR 2.0) which was essentially called for back in 2012 when the National Flood Insurance Program was last reauthorized. It, or something like it, will go into effect in October, but the NFIP is still functioning on a continuing resolution that calls for reauthorization by September 30, 2021.

RR 2.0 is designed to take into account both sea level rise, which would push up risks, and strategies implemented to limit future flooding (elevating homes, dune management, etc.) which could push risks down. The elevation certificates that are required when work is undertaken in the flood zone will be directly linked to a property's future risk rating.

The Town of Dennis has applied to be in the National Flood Insurance Programs Community System Rating CRS and we are waiting for our application to be reviewed by FEMA. In CRS communities, flood insurance premium rates are discounted to reflect the reduced flood risk resulting from the community's efforts that address the goals of the program.

The Town is following this closely and will update as information becomes available. There have been two recent articles in the Cape Cod Times on this updated Risk Rating.

### **3. CHAPTER 90 FUNDS –**

I am pleased to report that the Governor has communicated to municipalities, that Mass Dot anticipates Chapter 90 local transportation funding for fiscal year 2022 will total \$200 million statewide, pending final legislative approval.

Pending the final passage of the bond authorization, the Dennis Chapter 90 apportionment is \$716,702. This apportionment will be incorporated into automatically into our existing 10-year Chapter 90 contract.

The Chapter 90 program is an integral part of maintaining and enhancing the Dennis community's infrastructure and is essential component to our state and local partnership.

### **4. MASSACHUSETTS DREDGING PROGRAM 2021 GRANT APPLICATION –**

Harbormaster, Dawson Farber, seeks to file an application with the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development's Massachusetts Dredging Program. The proposed project consists of the maintenance dredging of the entrance channel to Sesuit Harbor in Dennis, MA. Sesuit Harbor is home to a municipal marina that accommodates approximately three hundred (300) vessels ranging in size from 13' - 55' in length, a private marina that accommodates approximately one hundred fifty (150) vessels and two (2) public boat launch ramps with parking lots that will accommodate over two hundred (200) vehicles. The harbor provides commercial and recreational vessels with access to the waters of Cape Cod Bay. The entrance channel to Sesuit Harbor is subject to significant shoaling annually due to winter storm events. If awarded the grant would fund \$75,000 and the required match of \$75,000 is proposed to be funded through an annual Capital Article for maintenance dredging of this area at the Annual Town Meeting to be held in May, 2021. Dredging is to be performed in January, 2022.

The site was last dredged in February, 2021. Funding for the project was allocated by the Town of Dennis and the 2020 Massachusetts EOHED Dredge Grant Program as well.

Due to severe winter shoaling that occurs annually, the Town of Dennis must dredge the harbor entrance channel annually. Failure to perform the maintenance dredging will result in frequent groundings of vessels.

## **5. CYBER GRANT –**

I am pleased to report that Dennis has been selected for the Cybersecurity Awareness Grant Program through the Executive Office of Technology Services & Security. I would like to thank our very own Dan Proto, MIS Director for his work on this technical grant application, well done.

Dear Elizabeth Sullivan, Town Administrator

We are pleased to inform you that following review of applications for the competitive Cybersecurity Awareness Grant program, Dennis has/have been selected to participate in the program.

As you know, cybersecurity is a growing threat to communities across the Commonwealth, and we are excited to partner with you to improve the cybersecurity posture of Dennis.

This program will make end-user cybersecurity training, assessment and simulation tools, which will be administered by EOTSS and ProofPoint (cybersecurity vendor), available to employees. As specified in the program application, participation will require:

Confirmation of executive-level commitment to the program.

Identification of a point of contact who will work directly with EOTSS and ProofPoint to successfully deploy the program.

Commitment to ongoing efforts to educate employees throughout this one-year program, including review of reports to identify and encourage employees who have not participated in the training.

Your contact for this program will be Nick Gonzales, he will work with you to successfully deploy the program.

Again, we look forward to partnering with you on this critically important initiative to improve cybersecurity posture across the Commonwealth.

Sincerely,

Curtis M. Wood  
Secretary

## **6. CAPE COD COMMISSION BUSINESS RESILIENCE WORKSHOP SERIES –**

The Cape Cod Commission has announced the first round of industry-specific webinars in its COVID-19 Recovery and Resiliency Workshop Series. This two-part virtual series is designed to assist Cape Cod business owners in navigating the economic impacts of the pandemic. The first round of industry-specific virtual workshops will introduce the Commission's broader business recovery and resiliency efforts and provide real examples of business resiliency and continuity to help local businesses identify effective pandemic-responsive strategies, including digital marketing, eCommerce, and collaboration/networking practices.

The series schedule is as follows:

- [March 1, 2021 at 3:00 pm: Business Resilience Workshop for Food Service and Restaurant Businesses](#)

- March 2, 2021 at 3:00 pm: Business Resilience Workshop for Accommodations Businesses
- March 3, 2021 at 6:00 pm: Business Resilience Workshop for Retail and Product-based Businesses
- March 4, 2021 at 3:00 pm: Business Resilience Workshop for Arts, Culture, and Recreation Businesses
- March 8, 2021 at 3:00 pm: Business Resilience Workshop for Service-based Businesses

All interested Cape Cod business owners are invited to attend this free workshop series, but space is limited, and registration is required. Business owners unable to attend their own industry's workshop are encouraged to participate in a different workshop that fits their schedule. More information and registration details are available at [cccom.link/business-recovery](https://cccom.link/business-recovery).

It is hard to believe we have been in the state of Covid emergency for a year now. Thank you to all the employees, community leaders and residents for all your tireless efforts in balancing health and life, it has not been an easy year for anyone, but no matter how challenging it has been I reflect and remain grateful for all that we have achieved together. Thank you everyone, for your bravery, patience and flexibility.

Have a great rest of the week - please stay vigilant, wear a mask and be well!!

Respectfully,

Elizabeth C. Sullivan  
Town Administrator