



May 5, 2020

RAVE ALERT: Mayor Sefatia Romeo Theken Provides a COVID-19 Update

Hi, this is Mayor Sefatia Romeo Theken. I have a few updates, but mainly I am calling to check in and let the residents of Gloucester know we appreciate the continued support and cooperation with our actions and orders to date.

As of yesterday, there had been 169 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the City of Gloucester: three were hospitalized, 68 were in isolation, 87 had recovered and sadly 11 had died. We are not seeing cases slow or decline as quickly as we would like. It is important that we all stay the course and continue to do your part to curb further transmission and keep our health providers safe.

I hope you had a chance to get some fresh air over the past few days. While you're out enjoying a stroll, jog or bike ride please remember to keep safe physical distancing and wear a mask or face covering while passing within 6 feet of others.

A large percentage of those with COVID-19 are asymptomatic. That means you have no symptoms but you are a carrier and can transmit this awful virus. A key transmission route of COVID-19 is through droplets that fly out of our mouths—that includes when we breathe and speak, not just when we cough or sneeze. Don't just wear a mask or face covering for yourself, wear it for others. Remember to be nice, respectful and have lots of patience.

Starting tomorrow, May 6, anyone in Massachusetts who is out in public and can't safely distance themselves from others **is required** to wear a face covering to help slow the spread of the coronavirus. The DPH is clarifying now that people with medical conditions can be exempt from face coverings and they do not need proof.

Contact Tracing is another important tool to slow the spread and beat this virus. The COVID-19 Community Tracing Collaborative was created to reach out to the contacts of confirmed positive COVID-19 patients to help others who have been potentially exposed to the virus. When nurses working with our local Board of Health or the MA COVID Team calls, you can do

your part by answering the phone and providing helpful information that will help flatten and reduce the curve here in Gloucester and throughout Massachusetts.

I was on a call this weekend with members of COVID-19 Community Tracing Collaborative said their biggest hurdle at the moment was getting through to people. If you see “MA COVID TEAM” come up on your phone please pick it up and provide the relevant information to the caller. Those calls will come from 833 or 857 area codes, will be made daily from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m and the information shared during the call is strictly confidential and will be treated as private medical information.

Because there are a lot of unfortunate scams taking place we wanted to let you know that these callers **will not**, I repeat, will not ask for social security number or insurance information.

I’m sure you are aware that that Governor Baker has formed a Reopening Advisory Board for safe reopening plans for Massachusetts. That group will provide reopening strategies by May 18. I want to be very clear with all of you that this does not mean that everything will open on that date. When we do reopen it will be under a new set of constraints and the rollout will happen slowly and in phases.

The Reopening Advisory Board’s strategies will give us a better understanding of how to reopen, when to reopen, what type of regulations we need to be put in place and what businesses/activities can reopen at specific times.

The Gloucester Board of Health and I have launched a City of Gloucester Reopening Task Force. This effort will bring critical sectors of our community together to review the Reopening Advisory Board’s strategies and further plan to safely reopen the local economy based on our community’s unique needs.

This week is National Nurses Week – thank you nurses! This awful virus have left many hospitalized. We are grateful for the compassion and care you provide to our family, friends, and neighbors who have been affected.

We also recognize the courage of those working on the front lines and at supermarkets, pharmacies, restaurants, the post office, and all other essential businesses.

I know I don’t have to remind you but we are still in the midst of a public health emergency and we all need to act accordingly. Please think of others first. Check in on your family, friends and neighbors. Let’s all continue to keep each other and ourselves safe.

It's been a long, long haul and I know it is taking a toll on people - emotionally, physically, and mentally. I know I'm referred to as the Fairy Godmother but I unfortunately do not have a magic wand to make everything better. I wish I did. For now, I ask for your continued patience and cooperation as we plan for what's next.

Thank you.