



FIRST SELECTMAN OFFICE

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*Matthew S. Knickerbocker, First Selectman
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*Dionne Craig, Office Administrator
Phyllis Kansky, HR/Grants Director
Mary Churchill, Benefits Assistant*

March 2, 2020

Dear Bethel Residents, Businesses and Community Partners,

The federal government, Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and State of Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) have advised all Connecticut residents to be prepared for the potential spread of COVID-19 in the United States and in Connecticut. Currently there are no known cases of person-to-person transmission of COVID-19 in our state. However, this is a rapidly evolving situation, and along with our town's health and emergency management officials, I urge all Bethel residents to begin taking precautionary measures now, before cases emerge in our area.

COVID-19 is a virus that attacks the respiratory system. It is spread from person to person via tiny droplets of fluid that are expelled when an infected person coughs or sneezes. At this time there is no vaccine capable of preventing or lessening the effects of a COVID-19. Therefore, the best way to mitigate its impact on our community is to avoid coming in contact with the virus. The CDC recommends the following personal protection measures on a routine basis:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. If soap and water not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash immediately.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular cleaning spray or wipe.

- Follow CDC's recommendations regarding mask use:
 - The CDC *does not* recommend that people who are well wear a face mask to prevent contracting a respiratory disease.
 - Facemasks *should* be worn by people who exhibit symptoms of COVID-19 to prevent spreading the virus to others.

COVID-19 is a novel virus, and as such there is still much to learn about it. One fact that is known, however, is an infected person can be a carrier, capable of spreading the virus to others for several days before they begin to show symptoms or know they are sick. Therefore, the best prevention strategy is to implement these hygiene practices now, not to wait until cases begin emerging in our area.

Laura Vasile and Tom Galliford, our town's Director of Health and Director of Emergency Management respectively, are monitoring this situation very closely along with state and federal health authorities, and will continue to work collaboratively with town and school officials to ensure necessary precautions are taken at all levels. We will update this information as often as necessary.

Please click the links below for additional information:

CDC COVID-19	https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html
CT DPH COVID-19	https://portal.ct.gov/DPH/Public-Health-Preparedness/Main-Page/2019-Novel-Coronavirus
Red Cross Preparedness	https://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/make-a-plan.html
DEMHS Preparedness	https://portal.ct.gov/DEMHS/Coronavirus

Sincerely,

Matt Knickerbocker, First Selectman

Laura Vasile, Director of Health

Tom Galliford, Emergency Management Director