

Covid-19 Update – Including Cases at The Commons in Lincoln April 7, 2020 Lincoln Board of Selectmen and Town Administrator

As of this writing, there have thus far been nine positive Covid-19 cases confirmed by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) in the Town of Lincoln. Thankfully, four of these individuals have recovered and have been released from isolation. Two of the confirmed positive individuals are residents of The Commons, a senior living community that is home to 330 residents. In addition, four staff members at The Commons who live in other towns have also tested positive. Although the monitoring of these non-Lincoln residents is performed by other towns, The Commons has advised us that three of its four infected staff members remain quarantined, and the fourth staff member has been cleared from isolation and has been cleared by the Town's public health nurse to return to work. Also, thankfully, the Town's emergency response personnel who were in contact with individuals who subsequently tested positive, have subsequently tested negative.

On behalf of all the residents of Lincoln, we offer our heartfelt concern and support for everyone living and working at The Commons. They are our relatives, our neighbors, and our friends. We support the decision made by the leadership team at The Commons to issue a statement (www.lincolnpublichealthnews.com) confirming the status of cases within their community and their response efforts while making best efforts to protect the legitimate privacy interests of specific individuals.

Our Town Public Health team, led by our Public Health Nurse, carefully monitors each case and their close contacts until isolation restrictions have been removed. Our team has taken special care to support the residents and management of The Commons through this incredibly trying time and continues to do so. In response to these recent cases and all cases, the same protocol is followed:

- Upon notification that a case has been confirmed by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH), our public health nurse is immediately in contact with infected individuals and/or the staff caring for the individuals.
- In the cases involving The Commons, our nurse was also immediately in communication with management at the facility. Should the need arise, this would also be true of any other shared housing facility.
- DPH protocols require that the infected individual and any close contacts (defined by DPH) be interviewed. After those close contacts are identified, the nurse calls them and asks them to self-quarantine for 14 days. The nurse will follow these close contacts for the entire 14-day quarantine period to monitor their health status.

We have observed that several of our neighboring Towns have stopped reporting town-specific data on guidance from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health because doing so under-represents the true number of cases in the community and may lead to a false sense of security. We considered adopting this posture but concluded that our residents understand that Massachusetts is experiencing widespread community transmission and are heeding the advice of our public health professionals. We will continue to report the total number of lab-confirmed positive cases in Lincoln on our website, www.lincolnpublichealthnews.com, believing that doing so provides some measure of the spread rate of the virus and one additional datapoint for residents to consult when making personal health decisions.

Please be assured that the Town's leadership team will continue to make important information readily available to the public so that our residents may make informed personal and family health decisions. Our Public Health Team continues to interact regularly and is making best efforts to keep our dedicated web page current.

We are so very grateful for the selfless dedication of our public health and safety professionals and volunteers; much is being demanded and they are rising to the challenge.