



# TOWN OF DOUGLAS

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## **Public Notice #9 2020 Coronavirus Response**

**March 24, 2020 11:00 A.M.**

The Town of Douglas has received notice of its first case of COVID-19. It's important to keep in mind that it was never a question of "if" we would have a case, but "when," and eventually, how many.

We must all remind ourselves that the reasons we are taking such extreme measures as a society is to prevent a surge of very sick people from overwhelming our hospital system. The best way to do that is to control the spread of the virus. The virus itself will cause minor illness in the large majority of people who contract it. For those people who develop a serious case of COVID-19, access to health care is necessary. To help them, we need to be sure there are resources available. It's all about the numbers.

The pandemic has not reached its peak in the United States. We anticipate the next few weeks will strain the resources of our community. We've begun planning for this now so we will have what we need to help people.

The Town's Emergency Operations Center (EOC) has been functioning since March 9, 2020. The Center is located in the Resource Room of the Municipal Center. The Center gathers all information pertinent to the emergency. Strategies for staffing Town functions are being changed as the conditions for first responders, support staff and the public in general have changed rapidly from normal life to today's advisory asking people to shelter at home.

Effective March 23, the Douglas Ambulance Department is making every effort to staff two ambulances around the clock. Since we have a limited number of paramedics on staff who make it possible for the Department to maintain "Advanced Life Support (ALS)" status, we will run the second ambulance to routine calls as "Basic Life Support (BLS)" with staff who have EMT-Basic training. Spreading out the work burden should reduce potential exposures of our paramedics.

Planning is underway to address the potential long term economic distress that prolonged periods of shutdown will create. The planning effort, being led by Patrice Rousseau, the director of the Adult Social Center, will need volunteers and supplies. Patrice and her staff are working even though the Center is closed; you may reach them at 508-476-2283 to see how you can help.

Also, the EOC has tasked Jeanne Lovett, the Town's Finance Director and Town Accountant, with formulating a plan for the financial operations of the Town in the event that Town Meeting is postponed. The General Assembly has provided Towns with many tools to address these considerations. In the meanwhile, the Finance Department continues to operate.

Citizens are advised to maintain social distancing and hygiene. All of the Town's plans include these elements as a starting point. Working together, we will get out of this.