



COVID-19

Protecting our community.
Keeping you informed.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR RESIDENTS



Working together to provide care and prevent the spread of COVID-19

Special to the Independent

Community health centers like the East Boston Neighborhood Health Center (EBNHC) are among America's first responders in public health crises like the COVID-19 pandemic.

It is essential that we play a role in educating the community and above all else, work together to ensure the safety of our staff, patients, and members of the communities we serve. It is with this in mind that EBNHC is partnering with Independent Newspaper Group and

other media to regularly communicate directly with residents about the ongoing efforts to provide care to our community and help stop the spread of the coronavirus.

As you know, the situation is changing every day. Like other health care organizations, we have enacted Emergency Operations Planning and are prepared should there be a rise in cases. We will be there for all who need us, regardless of age, income, insurance status, language, culture, or social circumstances. Our mission has not changed in

50 years and will guide us through this crisis.


EBNHC patients who believe they may be infected with COVID-19 should not come to the health center, but rather, should call us. We have implemented a thorough phone screening process for any patient ex-

hibiting a fever and flu-like symptoms or who has had a possible exposure. If testing is deemed necessary, arrangements will be made.


Of particular focus for us is making special provi-

See EBNHC Page 8


CORONAVIRUS IMPACT ON EVERETT



Left, A man walks through Everett into Chelsea wearing a protective mask in an effort to protect himself from getting the virus.



Meanwhile (above), grocery store shelves were emptied in a food shopping panic from Thursday to Sunday – while the public schools closed for more than a month and City Hall was shuttered for two weeks. See Page 5 for more photos.



Alyssa Charles, Director of Nutrition, showed Supt. Priya Tahiliani the lunch options available free to Everett children during the first meal distribution as part of the Coronavirus school shut-down response. The meal site at Everett High is open Monday to Friday for breakfast and lunch, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. See Page 8 for more photos.

PHOTOS BY KATY ROGERS

PHOTO BY KATY ROGERS

Encore Boston Harbor shuts down for at least two-weeks

By Seth Daniel

The Encore Boston Harbor resort and casino closed its doors for at least two weeks on Sunday morning at 6 a.m., following several days of intense debate on whether to stay open or to close – all intermingled with the emergence of a positive case from a guest who was at the resort on March 5 and later tested positive on March 12 for COVID-19.

That person who tested positive is believed to be, and was first reported to be, NBA Utah Jazz star Donovan Mitchell. They player went public on March 12 with the fact he had tested positive along with other members of the team.

The resort announced the closure of Memoire Nightclub and the Luxury Buffet at the resort on Thursday evening, March 12, in addition to a laundry list of cleaning efforts and safety precautions to prevent closure.

However, by Saturday, March 14, the Massachusetts Gaming Commission (MGC) ordered Encore and the state's other two casinos to close operations by 6 a.m. on March 15.

"In consultation with the MGC, Encore Boston Harbor announced that it will be closed to the public for two weeks," read a statement on

Suspended Council meetings could resume remotely

By Laura Plummer

City Council President Rosa DiFlorio has suspended Council meetings until April 27, mirroring the school district's response to the COVID-19 outbreak. But meetings could resume sooner thanks to a state-wide emergency order allowing local governments to conduct business remotely.

The administration of Gov. Charlie Baker and Lt. Gov. Karyn Polito announced on March 12 an emergency order modifying the state's Open Meeting Law. Generally, a certain number of members must be physically present to hold a meeting – known as a quorum. The order dispenses with this requirement, allowing some or all members to attend remotely.

"Low-cost telephone, social media and other internet-based technologies are currently available that will permit the convening of a public body through virtual means," the order states.

The order is in keeping with the advice from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) to "socially

New Supt. called on quickly to make critical decision on COVID-19

By Seth Daniel

Nine days into a new job – particularly as the leader of a large school district like Everett – most people would still be learning the ropes, but for Supt. Priya Tahiliani, those ropes last Thursday rapidly became an obstacle course with potential life and death consequences.

Last Thursday, having only been on the job since March 1, Tahiliani was suddenly sitting around a table in a very serious conversation with Mayoral staffers, City department heads, the Fire Chief and the Police Chief – and many of them she had never met before. Most were looking to her for guidance on whether they should be the first district to close the schools – and close them for a long period of time.

Having never had to make that call before – and being the first district in the state to make such a call when best-practices were still not yet clear – it was tremendous stress.

"It wasn't in my superintendent entry plan, that's for sure," she said on Monday from her office. "It was a collaborative effort and I have to give the mayor credit for his help and decisiveness. We all sat around the table and discussed the implications for every department. It has definitely been stressful – not just because of the rapid streams of things we hadn't planned for – but more for having to be mindful of the safety


Shut It Down

Mayor DeMaria, Supt. Tahiliani make quick decision to shut down the City

By Seth Daniel

The City of Everett moved first and fast on Thursday, March 12, shutting down all public buildings for two weeks and closing the schools until April 27.

They were drastic measures, and so early into the pandemic here, there was great concern as to how such measures would be



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Neighbors, customers and friends,

With our lives being changed on a daily basis by the Covid-19 pandemic, we want to update you on some changes that we are making at the Independent Newspaper Group.

Our office will remain open during regular business hours, Monday thru Thursday, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and on Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Customers can contact us at 781-485-0588 or by the emails at editor@reverejournal.com, seth@reverejournal.com or deb@reverejournal.com.

The full print edition will be online on Wednesday morning at everettindependent.com.

Our web pages will be updated with the latest new regulations and news from our elected leaders as soon as the news is made public.

We urge everyone to adhere to the rules and recommendations of our elected officials and the CDC in fighting this pandemic.

Stay safe

Your friends at the

Everett Independent

See SCHOOL Page 12

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A Time to Recall

Everett teacher calls on students to keep a diary of time spent out of school

By Seth Daniel

When Neil Plotnick and his fellow Everett High teachers left school on Thursday afternoon, March 12, they had no idea they wouldn't be coming back for more than a month.

That became clear soon after leaving school, and like many teachers, Plotnick began to worry about his students and how he could help keep them stay engaged during a time of crisis when they would be out of school for a prolonged period of time.

By 8:30 p.m. that evening, he had what has become a celebrated idea – keeping a diary of daily events, feelings and observations.

“By 5:30 p.m. I had posted some notes on C-programming for my computer class, as it was something we were going to learn about later in the year,” he said. “Then about three or four hours later, I thought about it and felt like it was also important that students have something that will help them catalog their ideas and emotions that they go through as this goes on. I had a feeling this was going to be a big deal as the days went on. I decided that they needed something they could write in every day and they could look back on 10, 20 or 30 years and read about what they experienced



Everett High School teacher Neil Plotnick got a great reaction from students and the general public when he called on his charges to keep a diary of what happens to them and how they feel during the prolonged school closure for COVID-19.

and see what they did and felt firsthand. The diary idea was something that creates a timeline to catalog what they're going through each day.”

Plotnick was formerly an IT worker and cybersecurity expert, but embarked on a second career in teaching more than 10 years ago. In 2008, he began working in Everett and has enjoyed teaching computers and special education classes.

His most recent – and maybe most important – assignment came over the Internet with his students. It was a heartfelt call for them to put together a memoir

that they can show their grandchildren and children in the future.

“The next few weeks are going to be something that you will remember for the rest of your lives,” he wrote to students last Thursday evening.

“There will be a time in the years to come when your children and grandchildren will ask you questions.

It may be important that you take some time to share your thoughts by writing them down. Clip some newspaper articles.

Record some videos. Draw, paint and sketch.

You can look back at the memories in 10, 20 and more years from now. I'm certain that you will look back and understand things differently than today. It's a great advantage of age and experience.”

Plotnick said it was simply grasping at a way to engage the students when they weren't in front of him.

“When we left the building, there was no mechanism and no announcements for people to get ready to set up distance learning or online classes,” he said. “We were like a boat dropped in the ocean without any navigation. I know students' first reactions would be that they are excited not to have to do anything. Then, I knew they would realize they're bored because there's nowhere to

go and nothing to do. You can only give them a prompt like this. You can lead them. Hopefully, this will engage them and they'll be excited to carry it through.”

He said he believes it will be a good exercise over the weeks for students to keep busy and note the new things that happen every day. Beyond that, he said it's something they can share with one another in online classroom platforms daily. Then, later in life, they can look back on it with a sober lens at how they experienced this unique time in history.

“Hopefully it gives them a lens to look back at themselves in 20 or 30 years and they can understand themselves better,” he said. “I hope it will be a great gift to them.”

The idea and the assignment were quickly picked up by members of the media, and praised by Supt. Priya Tahiliani. So far, he has done several television interviews, and has sparked an interest in journaling current events for more than Everett High students.

“If I'm not remembered for anything else, maybe this is one gift I can give to people,” he said. “You feel helpless now and maybe it is something you can do to help other people as they also go through this trying time.”

DeMaria maps out Everett's policy COVID-19

Special to the Independent

Massachusetts currently has many cases or more of COVID-19. The doubling time for this virus is 3-4 days continuously. Health professionals have advised that our best and most valuable weapon to combat this pandemic is social distancing, community mitigation, and public health intervention.

Now is the time to act. The City of Everett as of Thursday, March 12, at 7:30 pm will be taking the following measures:

- Everett City Hall will be closed to the general public for a 2-week period reopening on March 30, 2020.

- Everett Public Schools will be closed for a period of 30 school days beginning on Friday, March 13, 2020 and returning to school on Monday, April 27, 2020. The Everett Public Schools will be providing meals-to-go from the Everett High School lobby. These lunches will be available Monday through Friday, starting Monday, March 16th until Friday April 17, 2020 from the hours of 11:00am -1:00pm, with the exception of Good Friday, April 10th. To be eligible, students must be enrolled in the Everett Public Schools or Saint Anthony's School.

- Non-Essential City Employees shall not report to work. Those able to work remotely shall do so.

- Everett 311 will remain active during this 2-week period.

- City Clerk's Office: Marriage and Birth Certificates are not imminent therefore will not be available during the time of shut down. The Clerk's Office will communicate with all those planning to be married to ensure proper paperwork is issued prior to the ceremony. Burial permits will be available during the closure. Those seeking burial permits should contact Sergio Cornelio directly at Sergio.cornelio@ci.everett.ma.us or 617-981-0687. Those seeking a license that would be granted through the City Council or City Clerk's Office will be issued a temporary 30-day permit

to ensure compliance with Massachusetts State Law and City of Everett Charter and Ordinances.

- Connolly Center: The Connolly Center will be closed during the 2-week period. Those who rely on the Connolly Center for daily meals should contact Dale Palma, Program Coordinator at the Connolly Center at Dale.Palma@ci.everett.ma.us or 617-394-2323.

- Everett Public Libraries: The Everett Public Libraries will be closed indefinitely during the 2-week period. This includes both internal and external programming as well as general library functions.

- Online Bill-Pay: The City of Everett offers online bill pay for most transactions. Please utilize the City's website www.CityofEverett.com, which will remain accessible until City Hall reopens.

- Parking Enforcement: The City of Everett's parking enforcement will remain active during the 2-week period.

- Permitting/Code Enforcement: Building, plumbing, electrical, and gas permits can all be issued via the City's website.

- Fire Prevention: Fire Prevention Office in City Hall will be closed for the 2-week period. The Fire Prevention Office will report to various Fire Houses and the Everett Police Department.

- DPW: The Department of Public Works will remain active during the 2-week period.

- Everett Health and Wellness Center will be fully closed during the 2-week period.

- All community meetings are cancelled for the 2-week period.

We understand that this is not convenient; however, it is crucial for the social distancing strategy recommended by the Center for Disease Control and the Department of Public Health. All closures will be reassessed towards the end of the stated closing periods.

*Please note: With the evolving public health concern, this policy may change at any given time.

SJC issues order restricting court appearances

The Supreme Judicial Court (SJC) on Tuesday ordered that, because of the public health emergency arising from the COVID-19 pandemic, beginning March 18 and at least until April 6, the only matters that will be heard in-person in Massachusetts

state courthouses are emergency matters that cannot be held by videoconference or telephone.

Each of the seven Trial Court departments, in new standing orders to be issued March 17, will define emergency matters for their depart-

ments.

As a result of the SJC order, courthouses will be closed to the public except to conduct emergency hearings that cannot be resolved through a videoconference or telephonic hearing.

Clerks' offices shall remain open to the public to accept pleadings and other documents in emergency matters only.

All trials in both criminal and civil cases scheduled to commence in Massachusetts state courts between today and April 17 are continued to a date no earlier than April 21, unless the trial is a civil case where the parties and the court agree that the case can

be decided without the need for in-person appearance in court. Where a jury trial has commenced, the trial will end based on the manifest necessity arising from the pandemic and a new trial may commence after the public health emergency ends.

Courts, to the best of their ability, will attempt to address matters that can be resolved or advanced without in-person proceedings through communication by telephone, videoconferencing, email, or other comparable means.

The SJC and the Appeals Court in the coming days will offer guidance with regard to oral arguments scheduled in April in these appellate courts.

- LEGAL NOTICE - CITY OF EVERETT



BOARD OF APPEALS
484 Broadway
Everett, Massachusetts
02149
(617) 381-7445

To Whom It May Concern:

This notice is to inform you that a public hearing will beheld on Monday, April 6, 2020 at 7:00 PM, Everett City Hall, 3rd Floor George Keverian Hearing Room. All interested parties may attend and opinions will be heard regarding the following petition.

Whereas a petition has been presented by:

Property Address:
83-85 Linden Street
Map/Parcel: C0-03-00109
Person Requesting:
Bonum LLC
209 Chelsea St.
Everett, MA 02149

The applicant proposes to alter the existing six (6) family dwelling on a 8940 sf lot located within the Dwelling District and convert it to an eight (8) unit multi-family dwelling. The new renovation will consist of constructing two (2) additional dwelling units within the basement level of the structure. No exterior buildout has been proposed. The proposed parking for 8 vehicles will be provided on the lot. The existing six (6) family dwelling is nonconforming as only one and two family dwellings are allowed in the Dwelling district and the current structure exceeds the .5 FAR requirements. The proposed alteration will further increase the nonconforming use of the structure.

Permit was denied in accordance to the City of Everett Zoning Ordinance as follows:

Violations:

1. Appendix A Section 3 General Requirements C: Which states the following: "Existing non-conforming structure or uses may be extended or altered, provided that such extension. Alteration or change of use shall be permitted only upon the grant of a Special Permit by the zoning board of appeals after a public hearing and a finding by the board that such extension. Alteration or change of use shall not be substantially more detrimental to the neighborhood than the existing non-conforming use of structure." To increase the number of dwelling units from (6) to eight (8) the applicant must seek relief in the form of a special permit for the Everett Zoning Board of Appeals.

2. Appendix A Section 17 Off-Street Parking (0)5: which states the following: "The design of parking lots for the parking of more than five (5) vehicles shall be submitted to the inspector of build- ings for review and approval and shall be subject to the following requirements: All parking areas shall have an access road with a minimum of eighteen (18) feet to allow ingress and exiting at same time."

The applicant's plan increases the number of parking from four (4) to eight (8) spaces requiring an 18' access aisle. The parking area currently has a nonconforming access aisle to the rear parking area with the dimension of 8.9'. The nonconformity of the access aisle will therefore be increased. The applicant must seek relief in the form of a special permit.

3. Appendix A Section 17 Off-Street Parking (A)2: which states the following: "Off-street parking facilities shall be provided in accordance with the requirements as outlined below. Multifamily dwellings 2 parking spaces per dwelling unit" Applicant is proposing 8 parking spaces where 16 spaces are required. The lot currently contains 4 parking spaces and is therefore nonconforming. The applicant must seek relief in the form of a special permit.

Mary Gerace - Chairman
Roberta Suppa - Clerk
March 18, 2020 & March 25, 2020

- LEGAL NOTICE - CITY OF EVERETT



BOARD OF APPEALS
484 Broadway
Everett, Massachusetts
02149
(617) 381-7445

To Whom It May Concern:

This notice is to inform you that a public hearing will be held on Monday, April 6, 2020 at 7:00 PM, Everett City Hall, 3rd floor George Keverian Hearing Room. All interested parties may attend and opinions will be heard regarding the following petition. Whereas a petition has been presented by:

Property Address:
28-30 Carlson Street
Map/Parcel: A 0-04-000166
Person Requesting:
Mr. Eduardo Matosinho
28 Carlson Street
Everett, MA 02149

To the said Board of Appeals, the owner/applicant proposes to construct a new two (2) family on an existing 5814 sf lot that currently has an existing two (2) family residential building that was constructed in April 1928.

Reason for Denial:

1. The applicant proposed to (2) structures on a single lot and therefore must seek relief in the form of a variance.
2. The current and proposed floor plans propose a floor to area ratio (FAR) of 1.17 exceeding the maximum requirement of .5.
3. The proposed front yard is only 8'-2" +/-.

Zoning Ordinance:

Section 3 General Requirements paragraph 13 which states the following: "...there shall be not more than one (1) structure of the type permitted for each such lot."

Section 4 Dwelling Districts (b) Dimensional Requirements line 2 Lot Area, C which states the following: "c. All other uses-----0.5 maximum floor area ratio"

Section 4 Dwelling Districts (b) Dimensional Requirements 4 Front Yard which sates the following:

"Twenty (20) feet minimum except where the average front yard of at least two (2) buildings on the same side of the street and within two hundred (200) feet of the lot are less than twenty (20) feet, and the front yard may be equal to the average of those buildings but not less than ten (10) feet. Porches may encroach ten (10) feet onto the required front yard. Stairs shall be excluded from any front yard restrictions."

Mary Gerace
Chairman
Roberta Suppa
Clerk
Board of Appeals
March 18, 2020
March 25, 2020

TO PLACE YOUR AD CALL 781-485-0588

- LEGAL NOTICE - CITY OF EVERETT



CITY OF EVERETT
EVERETT PLANNING BOARD
PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE
484 BROADWAY, ROOM 26
EVERETT, MASSACHUSETTS 02149

Hearing on the following application:
983 Broadway
Site Plan Review

In accordance with the provisions of M.G.L Chapter 40A, Section 19 of the Everett Zoning Ordinance, the Everett Planning Board will conduct a public hearing on Monday, March 23, 2020 at 7:00 PM in the Speaker George Keverian Room, Third floor, City Hall, 484 Broadway, Everett, MA 02149 to consider the above-listed applications in connection with the proposal to build a 9 unit (three story structure) as shown on plans entitled "Site Plan for Board of Appeals #983 Broadway" (the "Site Plan") on a parcel shown on the Site Plan, being a parcel of land referenced by Assessor's Department as A0-01-000147.

The application with narrative and the Site Plan were received on February 19, 2020. The plans are entitled "Site Plan for Board of Appeals #983 Broadway, Everett, MA 02149" were prepared by Hayes Engineering, Inc. 603 Salem St, Wakefield MA and prepared for the owner REX-E LLC of Wakefield MA. The application was prepared by Atty. David W. Carr dated February 19, 2020

A copy of the application and plans are on file and available in the Office of the City Clerk and the Department of Planning and Development, both located at City Hall, 484 Broadway, Everett, MA 02149 and can be inspected during regular City Hall business hours. All persons interested or wishing to be heard on the proposal should appear at the time and place designated above. As items may be continued to later dates, please contact Shane O'Brien of the Department of Planning & Development at 617-944-0236 before attending.

Frederick Cafasso, Chairman
March 11, 2020
March 18, 2020

McLaughlin suspends state representative campaign during COVID-19 crisis

Staff Report

State Representative candidate Michael McLaughlin – also a city councilor – announced this week he is suspending his state rep campaign during the COVID-19 response, a move that will lead to him stepping off of the campaign trail and halting his door-knocking plans.

He first pulled his Nomination Papers for the seat in early February and said he has been out meeting residents and knocking on doors in the neighborhoods. That, he said, will temporarily stop.

“Since pulling my papers in early February, I have enjoyed tremendously the amount of door-knocking that we have done on many streets and at countless doors throughout the community,” he said. “I have enjoyed visiting the senior development’s throughout the community. When I kicked off this campaign, I could never have dreamed that I would be writing this letter. This being said in the face of the coronavirus, I have only one priority in mind currently and that is keeping my family, friends, neighbors and community safe.”

He said he is suspending the campaign immediately until May 4, and called on State Rep. Joe McGonagle to do the same. He also said if something changes during that time, he would be willing to revisit the timeline.

“I will always put the needs and health of our community before politics or anything else for that matter,” he said.

He said if anyone wishes to reach out to him in the meantime, they can call him at (781) 560-3791 or by email at mikeforeverett@yahoo.com.

Council // CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

isolate” to reduce the risk of exposure to the disease. This advice is especially crucial to individuals over 60 (almost half of the City Council) or with compromised immune systems.

Governments must also provide the public with real-time access to remote meetings. Those that are financially unable to do so may post meeting contents online afterward in the form of a recording or transcript.

The Everett City Clerk’s office is researching the possibility of virtual meetings.

“We don’t want to put people at risk, so we’ll see how we can do it remotely,” City Clerk Sergio Cornelio told Independent. “We’re all on board and ready to keep moving forward.”

“The safety of our residents and my colleagues is our main priority,” said Councilor Anthony DiPierro. “The whole situation remains fluid and I defer to President DiFlorio and Clerk Cornelio on how we will proceed.”

“I can do whatever is necessary and will remain flexible,” said Councilor Jimmy Tri Le.

“I have faith that Clerk Cornelio and Council President DiFlorio will work collaboratively and quickly to get our government running,” said Councilor Michael McLaughlin. “We have an obligation to work together to put public safety first.”

“It is a very difficult time for everyone right now,” said Councilor Fred Capone. “We need to do what we can to minimize the spread of the virus.”

“The emergency precautions adopted by the City and state continue to become stricter,” said Councilwoman Stephanie Martins. “I have the ability and the tools to meet remotely, and am open to online meetings during this period.”

“I would be open to virtual meetings. I can do this from my home,” said Councilor Gerly Adrien. “In times like now, we should be utilizing technology to

deliver to our constituents.”

However, some councilors questioned how practical it was to expect the body to meet remotely, citing the fact that not all members have reliable internet access or the prerequisite technological acumen. Another concern was how residents would be able to participate in virtual meetings, something that other governments around the Commonwealth are currently exploring.

There is at least one piece of business that needs to be addressed prior to April 27 - the list of department heads the mayor is seeking to confirm. The piece was on the agenda at the last Council meeting on March 9, but the body voted to postpone the vote until résumés for appointees could be provided by the administration.

“I want to make sure the Mayor’s appointments do not go through without the résumé review,” said Councilor Adrien.

EVERETT’S ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER HONORED



City of Everett Animal Control Officer Stacia Gorgone received an official proclamation from the Everett City Council for his outstanding work in the city. Gorgone was re-appointed to the position for a three-year term. In the photo above, Councilman-at-Large Wayne Matewsky and Ward 2 Councilwoman Stephanie Martins present Officer Gorgone with the proclamation commending her service to the city.

Money tips to stay safe from Coronavirus

By Jill Gonzalez, WalletHub analyst

•Ask Your Bank for Help

“Many banks and credit unions have stated they are willing to offer assistance to people who face temporary financial hardship due to the coronavirus,” said Jill Gonzalez, WalletHub analyst. “These might include measures like being able to skip a payment, having temporarily lower rates, getting fees waived or having a credit line increase. If you find yourself struggling financially, call customer service to make your case. Make sure to clearly and politely articulate the reasons for your hardship.”

•Focus on Maximizing Savings

“Most people’s jobs aren’t immune to the coronavirus. So, it’s a good idea to set aside as much money as you can from each paycheck in case coronavirus impacts your ability

to work or causes you to have additional medical expenses,” said Jill Gonzalez, WalletHub analyst. “Even beyond the current situation, it’s always good to have an emergency fund. Avoid panicking about stocks, too, and just remember that it’s only a matter of time until the virus runs its course.”

•Take Advantage of Travel Insurance but Know the Limits

“If your travel provider cancels a trip because of the coronavirus, a ‘trip cancellation or interruption’ policy might help you get your money back,” said Jill Gonzalez, WalletHub analyst. “Some credit cards offer this benefit for free, though issuers have been cutting back in recent years. Keep in mind that if you cancel your own trip out of fear of the virus, your insurance policy probably won’t cover you unless you have coverage for canceling ‘for any reason’ or doctor’s orders

to quarantine yourself.”

•Use Credit Cards, Not Cash

“Though there’s not much evidence to show that touching cash spreads coronavirus, it’s theoretically possible, and the Federal Reserve has been quarantining bank notes from Asia. China also burned some of its currency that had been circulated through the Wuhan area,” said Jill Gonzalez, WalletHub analyst. “Using a credit card’s contactless capability may help give consumers more peace of mind. Plus, credit cards can be used for online purchases, allowing consumers to avoid shopping at crowded stores. In addition, consumers that decide to stock up on essential items and spend more than usual in the coming months can recoup some of that expense, and get some extra time to pay, by using a rewards credit card.”

Courtesy WalletHub

Closed // CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Thursday. “The doubling time for this virus is three to four days continuously. Health professionals have advised that our best and most valuable weapon to combat this pandemic is social distancing, community mitigation, and public health intervention. Now is the time to act.”

The measures currently in place include:

- Everett City Hall will be closed to the general public for a two-week period, reopening on March 30.
- Non-Essential City Employees shall not report to work. Those able to work remotely shall do so.
- Everett Public Schools will be closed for a period of 30 school days beginning on Friday, March 13, and returning to school on Monday, April 27. The Everett Public Schools will be providing meals-to-go from the Everett High School lobby. These lunches will be available Monday through Friday, until Friday April 17, from the hours of 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., with the exception of Good Friday, April 10. To be eligible, students must be enrolled in the Everett Public Schools or Saint Anthony’s School.
- Everett 311 will remain active during this two-week period.
- The Connolly Center will be closed during the two-week period. Those who rely on the Connolly Center for daily meals should contact Dale Palma, Program Coordinator at the Connolly Center at Dale. Palma@ci.everett.ma.us or

617-394-2323.

- City Clerk’s Office: Marriage and Birth Certificates are not imminent therefore will not be available during the time of shut down. The Clerk’s Office will communicate with all those planning to be married to ensure proper paperwork is issued prior to the ceremony. Burial permits will be available during the closure. Those seeking burial permits should contact Sergio Cornelio directly at Sergio.cornelio@ci.everett.ma.us or 617-981-0687. Those seeking a license that would be granted through the City Council or City Clerk’s Office will be issued a temporary 30-day permit to ensure compliance with Massachusetts State Law and City of Everett Charter and Ordinances.
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- Fire Prevention Office in City Hall will be closed for the two-week period. The Fire Prevention Office will report to various Fire Houses and the Everett Police Department.
- The Department of Public Works will remain active during the two-week period.
- Everett Health and Wellness Center will be fully closed during the two-week period.
- All community meetings are cancelled for the two-week period.

Mayor DeMaria’s announcement indicated that the measures could be changed or re-evaluated at any time. Changes could take place if things get better or worse.

The mayor stressed that in the interim he is asking residents to learn about social distancing and how to keep one another safe during the spread of COVID-19.

“As your Mayor, I have made the commitment to always act on the best interests of the residents of our city,” he posted on Facebook. “As many of you know, I am of Italian descent. I have an abundance of family and friends that still call Italy home. I humbly ask that everyone (make an effort to) understand how social distancing and staying home can change the pandemic we are being faced with.”

For updates, check the City’s website at www.ci.everett.ma.us.

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Everett

Independent

President: Stephen Quigley

Editor in Chief: Cary Shuman

THE COVID-19 EPIDEMIC: A WAKE-UP CALL FOR THE U.S. HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

In the aftermath of the terrorist attacks on Sept. 11, 2001, Americans forever were forced to change the manner in which we traveled. The strikes on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon made clear that the screening system we had in place at airports at that time was inadequate for meeting the threat posed by a determined international terrorist organization.

Long security lines at every airport in this country, as well as around the world, soon became the norm, as new protocols were put into place for our protection against future attacks. Americans didn't -- and still don't -- like them, but all of us understand that the inconvenience and expense of the enhanced security measures are essential for our safety.

Similar to the issue of inadequate airport security before 9/11, the onset of the world-wide, COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the gross shortcomings of the American health care system's ability to confront a major health emergency of the magnitude we are facing today.

The U.S. is far less capable of dealing with an influx of patients afflicted with coronavirus than every other industrialized nation in the world (as well as many poorer nations). Relative to our population, we have far fewer doctors, nurses, hospital beds, and acute care capabilities than countries all across the globe that already are struggling with the onslaught of COVID-19.

With our emergency rooms already at 75-90 percent of capacity at any given time, it will not take much to overwhelm every hospital in every city in every state if this pandemic comes even close to a worst-case scenario.

In addition, a huge percentage of our population has no direct access to quality health care that could identify early exposure to the virus. For example, federal emergency officials have urged every citizen to call their doctor first, rather than just reflexively coming into the doctor's office, if they suspect they are becoming ill. However, about 25 percent of our fellow Americans -- about 75 million of us -- do not have a primary care physician either because they do not have health insurance or are underinsured. So what are those people supposed to do -- other than flood into emergency rooms?

The bottom line is this: America's healthcare system is under stress even in the best of circumstances. It is neither designed nor capable of ensuring the optimum health outcomes for most of our citizenry and excludes a large percentage of our population altogether even in ordinary circumstances. And ironically, we spend more on our healthcare by far -- and get less for it -- than any other nation on earth.

Hopefully, the current crisis will serve as the equivalent of a 9/11 wake-up call so that we can make significant changes to our healthcare system in order to ensure that every American has access to quality healthcare for the protection of our people, both individually and collectively.

Your opinions, please

The Everett Independent welcomes letters to the editor. Our mailing address is 385 Broadway, Revere, MA 02151. Our fax number is 781-485-1403. Letters may also be e-mailed to editor@everettindependent.com. Letters must be signed.

We reserve the right to edit for length and content.

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Independent Forum



LETTERS to the Editor

A STATE SHUTDOWN MAY BE NEEDED

Dear Editor:

On Monday, I signed the online petition #Shut-DownMass in the face of coronavirus after four days of spending countless hours talking with health care professionals, the City administration and senior citizens. Hearing many thoughts and concerns, I decided Monday morning the time had come with great urgency that we need to prevent the spread of the coronavirus at every possibility - including a state shutdown to limit public contact. To some this measure might seem like an overreaction but before we are able to understand

the meaningful impact of this contagious disease, we need to bring in more testing so that we can test as many of the 6 million residents in Massachusetts as soon as possible.

Again, seeing Gov. Charlie Baker on Sunday put measures in place that all bars and restaurants be closed as of Tuesday March 17, it raises valid concern why we should not close all businesses to public involvement. This would be a positive way to help slow down and keep people out of harm's way. In my eyes, what makes one business less meaningful than another. If we are encouraging social distancing, then lets either be all in or not at all. There are many ways

to keep all of the essential businesses open and running with new protocols and procedures in place. This would lessen direct contact with one another. I believe the governor made the right call on allowing take-out from food businesses and I think we could do the same at supermarkets, pharmacies and other businesses by putting a pre-order system in place that would be available for pick-up only service. After seeing a young student contract the virus by getting an autograph from a basketball player, it should raise serious concerns that by touching products and putting them back on shelves in stores and other facilities, the virus can easily pass

from one person to another.

In closing, until we have the opportunity to meaningfully test here in Massachusetts, I strongly believe each one of us have a common obligation to keep our family, friends, and community safe. In the words of President John F. Kennedy "Victory has 100 fathers and defeat is an orphan." I will continue to push for the betterment of our community and work with colleagues on the City Council, the DeMaria Administration State Officials, health care officials and residents, so that together we can all get past this time of great uncertainty.

Michael J. McLaughlin
Ward Six City Councilor

GUEST OP-ED

An important message from the Chief of the Everett Fire Department regarding COVID-19 (coronavirus)

As the Everett Fire Department continues to monitor the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic that we are facing as a nation, we want to assure our community that the Everett Fire Department will continue to respond to any and all emergency calls.

A priority that I have as your Fire Chief is to make sure the members of the Everett Fire Department are able to provide the utmost professional emergency

response, but in order to do that, first and foremost, I need to ensure that my department remains healthy and safe throughout any and all events. Please be aware when calling dispatch for any emergency you may be asked additional questions to reduce the potential exposures to our members.

I would also like to notify the public that for the time being, the Everett Fire Department is suspending all fire station visits and ap-

paratus tours to protect our members and visitors. This includes visits from family members of our department as well. We always appreciate the gesture of our community members delivering food to the stations, however, please understand that we cannot accept food donations at this time. My highest priority is to keep our department and the community safe and healthy. By following these precautionary efforts,

we can reduce the risks and make sure everyone returns home healthy to their families. I cannot stress enough the important of taking the various precautions to protect yourself and your loved ones. I appreciate your understanding as we take these preventive measures to guarantee our team is ready to properly respond to our community.

Fire Chief
Anthony R. Carli

GUEST OP-ED

We need to take care of each other

that changed our lives overnight. Likewise, today we see the real risk to countless numbers of elderly and infirm persons, to healthcare workers, indeed to our hospital system, and even the economic well-being of millions of people whose lives have been upended by the necessary closings and precautions.

Just as after 9/11 we need to come together as a people with a profound sense of solidarity and community, realizing that so many people are suffering and fearful. We need to take care of each other, especially by reaching out to the elderly and the most vulnerable.

Although we cannot celebrate public Masses at this time because we wish to follow the directives of the

government, I want to assure all of you that we, your priests, are offering Mass each day for all of you. You are all spiritually united in these masses where we pray for the living and the dead. Our priests in the parishes are there and can be contacted. We are trying to use social media and Internet streaming as a means of sharing communications.

I am grateful to all of our priests and parish staffs and the 3,000 Catholic school teachers and administrators who are all working diligently to be able to serve our people in these challenging circumstances. Please remember that your parish communities depend on the offertory collections and will need your support going forward to carry on

their crucial work.

Let me share with you an account I read many years ago that made quite an impression on me. A group of rowdy university students on the train in France spotted an old man sitting alone praying his Rosary. The students who prided themselves on their sophistication and scientific outlook began to mock the old man who seemed unperturbed by their hazing. Suddenly a passenger jumped to his feet and rebuked the students: "Stop bothering Dr. Pasteur." The students were shocked and embarrassed. That old man praying the Rosary was Louis Pasteur, a national hero, a rock star, whose research

See OP-ED Page 5

CORONAVIRUS IMPACT ON EVERETT

As the Coronavirus pandemic grows locally, the Greater Boston area has seen a scramble to grocery stores and speculation as businesses close their doors.



Everett Public Schools officially closed until April 27.



Encore Boston Harbor closes to the public on Sunday.



Councilor Mike McLaughlin speaks to television news regarding the closure of Encore Boston Harbor.



Essential employees continue to work in Everett while all public buildings are shut down, including City Engineer Julius Ofurie.



Shoppers stock up on groceries and essentials, though the hoarding is discouraged.



Encore Boston Harbor closes its doors by order of the Massachusetts Gaming Commission on Sunday.



Workers on the roof of Elm Street Bakery continue to work in the early stages of the pandemic.

Op-Ed // CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

his feet and rebuked the students: “Stop bothering Dr. Pasteur.” The students were shocked and embarrassed. That old man praying the Rosary was Louis Pasteur, a national hero, a rock star, whose research and inventions have saved millions of lives. Pasteur discovered the principles of vaccination and pasteurization. Arguably, he did more than any other person in the history of medicine by his remarkable breakthroughs in understanding the causes and prevention of diseases.

I share this story to preface my request to pray the Rosary each day. Many

of us remember growing up praying the Rosary every evening as a family. In the history of our people, during the wars, famines, plagues, and persecution, the Rosary has been the powerful prayer of the Catholic people as we see in the example of the eminent scientist Louis Pasteur. Even if we cannot go to Mass, the Rosary is always accessible to us. It is a prayer that puts us in touch with God as we reflect on the mysteries of the life of Christ and the Blessed Virgin. It is a prayer that can be prayed by the simplest present and the smartest

scientist.

St. Ignatius of Loyola once said that we must work as if everything depended upon us, and pray as if everything depended upon God.

It is indeed encouraging to see how many people are visiting our churches for personal prayer and adoration during this time of enforced social distancing. May this strange Lent that we are living, help us to overcome the physical distance by growing closer to God and by strengthening our sense of solidarity and community with each other.

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Photos will be published on April 8th and April 9th

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Chelsea Record | Everett Independent
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PHOTOS BY KATY ROGERS

Carolann Cardinale celebrated her acceptance to UMass Amherst with her family, father Larry, brother Ryan, mother Michelle, and brother Jason.

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READ ACROSS AMERICA DAY IN EVERETT SCHOOLS

Classrooms all over the Madeline English School were transformed into a Dr. Seuss paradise for the school's annual Read Across America Day. The school had several guest readers, including Supt. Priya Tahiliani, members of the Northeastern University women's hockey team, and several Everett Police officers.



Councilor Fred Capone entertains the children with a Dr. Seuss classic.



Everett Officer Tim Benedetto reads to the students.

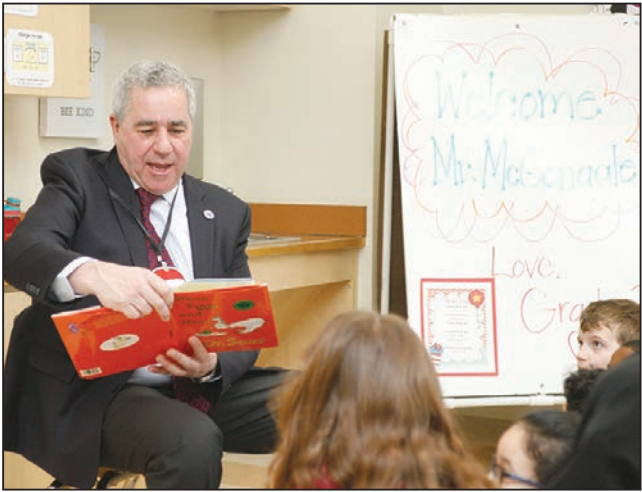


Paul Perillo of Patriots Football Weekly, who grew up in Everett and honed his writing skills here, speaks with middle schoolers from the Maddie English.



PHOTOS BY SETH DANIEL

Supt. Priya Tahiliani reads to students at the Maddie English.



State Rep. Joe McGonagle reads 'Green Eggs and Ham.'



Councilor John Hanlon read to students, and stayed around to help them with their science lessons.



Northeastern player Peyton Cullaton reads a lively classic to a group of students.



Director of Science Ann Ritchie reads to students.



Northeastern University Women's Hockey teammates Paige Capistran and Andrea Renner display the Beanpot and Hockey East trophies before reading to students.



Maddie English student ambassador Diana Valle accompanies Capt. Paul Landry to his reading room on Tuesday, March 10, along with a copy of Dr. Seuss's 'Sneetches.' Several guest readers converged on the English School March 10 to read to students as part of Read Across America.



School Committeeman Marcony Almeida-Barros takes questions from the youngsters at the Maddie English School.



Instructional Coach MaryBeth Benedetto poses with several administrators and guest readers at the Madeline English School.



Student ambassadors with Councilor Jimmy Tri Le and Administrator Janet Colameta.

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**Pediatrics Department:
ACCEPTING NEW PATIENTS**

EBNHC Welcomes Galen Harnden, MD

Dr. Harnden is pleased to join our Pediatrics team! He loves EBNHC's multi-generational community, seeing patients and siblings whose parents and sometimes grandparents were our Pediatrics patients too! Dr. Harnden went to medical school at the University of Illinois/Chicago and speaks Spanish. **To book an appointment with Dr. Harnden, call 617-568-4477.**



www.ebnhc.org

EVERETT PUBLIC SCHOOLS DISTRIBUTE LUNCHES WHILE SCHOOLS ARE CLOSED

The Everett Public Schools will be closed until April 27 in order to prevent the spread of the Coronavirus. School lunch workers will continue to distribute lunch amidst the pandemic at Everett High School from 11 a.m. -1 p.m.



Mats McNally visited the high school for school lunch on Monday.



John Gersbeck carried a crate of fresh apples out of the school.



School Committeeman Marcony Almeida-Barros and Councilor Stephanie Martins greet one another with an elbow bump.



Bruce Cromwell and his boys, Bruce and Noah, picked up lunch on Monday at Everett High School.



Sheri Delling passed along a packaged lunch.



Cafeteria workers set up a drive through system where families can pick up lunch for their children without leaving their car.



Executive Chef Susan Mealey distributed meals to students who are out of school due to the pandemic.

Council holds off on confirming Mayor’s department heads

By Laura Plummer

On Monday, March 9, City Council was asked to vote on 13 heads of departments appointed by Mayor Carlo DeMaria.

The body voted, however, to move the matter to committee when concerns were raised regarding their credentials.

Mayor DeMaria is seeking confirmation for the following City employees for a period of two years: Veterans Services Director Jeanne Cristiano, IT Director Kevin Dorgan, Budget Director Lauren Hurley, Water Superintendent Ernie Lariviere, City Solicitor Colleen Mejia, Business Manager Robert Moreschi, HHS Director Jerry Navarra, Operations Manager Kevin Noonan, Treasurer Rocco Pesce, Communications Director Tom Philbin, Inspectional Services Director James Soper and Planning Director Tony Sousa.

Though most of the individuals have been in these positions for years, if not decades, Councilor Michael McLaughlin suggested the vote be postponed until Council procures the résumés of those listed so as to prevent a repeat of “what happened one and a half years ago.”

Since then, some councilors have been wary about confirming appointments

by the administration before conducting a check of all resumes.

Earlier in the evening, it was also discovered that the administration was promoting a police officer to a special position, despite the fact the state had no record of her current credentials.

Councilor McLaughlin said he had reached out to Chief of Staff Kevin O’Donnell and HR Director Lara Wehbe for the résumés but had not yet heard back. He made it clear he had no personal objections about the department heads in question.

“Most of these individuals I know personally. These are capable people,” he said. “This is just a postponement so we can get further information.”

Councilor Anthony DiPierro defended the mayor.

“These are all qualified, good-quality people. They answer the phone every time I call,” he said. “I don’t see the reason for the constant roadblocks. We are not the appointing authority in the City. I will not support a delay.”

Councilor John Hanlon said he preferred to revive the old method of bringing each appointee in for an interview.

“Years ago, they came before Council and we had the chance to interview them,” he said. “It wouldn’t be bad if we got the résumé

of the new [appointee], but I don’t think our city solicitor is going to have a résumé because she’s been here 18 years.”

Council voted 9-2 to move the matter to the next meeting of the Legislative Affairs Committee, with only Councilors DiPierro and Hanlon in opposition.

“Where a member requested résumés and there are several new members who may be unfamiliar with appointees, it was the most prudent course of action,” Councilor Fred Capone told Independent.

“Time and again, this mayor and his administration are making exceptions for certain people, and that’s not fair,” said Councilor Gerly Adrien. “We should see everyone’s résumés.”

The next meeting of the Legislative Affairs Committee was set for March 19, but has been canceled due to the coronavirus situation.

On Feb. 10, Council confirmed 15 board and commission appointments made by Mayor DeMaria, despite the fact at least some members questioned whether appointees met the standards for those positions. At the time, Councilors Adrien and McLaughlin moved to postpone a vote until the information could be provided - a motion that was not allowed.



Superintendent Priya Tahlilani greets cafeteria staff from the high school during the first day of the Coronavirus shutdown.

EBNHC // CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

sions for the many elderly we care for in our community. Our Neighborhood PACE program cares for hundreds of seniors and the health center sees thousands of others who depend on us for their care. Given that the elderly population is at the highest risk, we are focused on taking every step possible to continue giving high-quality care at our PACE Centers, in homes, and within the primary care setting without exacerbating risk.

To minimize potential exposure to otherwise healthy patients, we are asking all EBNHC pa-

tients to postpone any routine or preventive healthcare. However, for patients in need of appointments, we can help you with telephone visits or if absolutely needed, we can see you in person. The goal is to minimize transmission of coronavirus by social distancing.

At EBNHC, we are fortunate to have a deeply committed team that always rises to the occasion and we will be here for our community during and long after this public health crisis. We will continue to work closely with Department of Public Health,

the Boston Department of Public Health, and both state and federal government as every day brings forth new information and recommended guidelines. Throughout the duration of this public health emergency, we will maintain open lines of communication and will continue to educate the public through this regular column as well as in social media and our website. We wish the best for you and your family at this very difficult time.

East Boston Neighborhood Health Center

TO PLACE YOUR AD
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DiDomenico updates community on COVID-19 actions at the State House

COVID-19 Update from Sen. Sal DiDomenico: As you all know, the COVID-19 situation is evolving quickly, so I want to take the opportunity to ensure that everyone is up to date on some of the recent steps that the State Legislature and Gov. Charlie Baker have taken to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

- On Thursday, March 12, my colleagues and I in the Legislature allocated \$15 million dollars in a supplemental budget to support the Commonwealth’s monitoring, treatment, containment, public awareness, and prevention efforts in response to COVID-19. This was an important first step to allow the Administration and DPH to use these funds in the areas of greatest need, according to public health experts.
- The Legislature has also

provided initial funding of \$95,000 at the request of DPH for State Lab supplies and equipment for time sensitive COVID-19 testing.

- Last week, Gov. Baker announced an emergency order temporarily suspending the requirement for public access to the physical location where a public meeting is taking place, allowing state and local governments to carry out essential functions and operations safely for members of the public, government officials, and employees. This will allow for the use of a phone conference line for members of the public, social media, and/or other internet streaming services, on-line meeting services, or methods of access.
- On Friday, March 13, the Department of Public Utilities issued a moratorium to

suspend all shut-offs of gas and electric utilities, including Municipal Light and Gas Plants, for residential customers during the State of Emergency.

- This past weekend, the Baker Administration announced a slate of changes to the state’s clinical and health care infrastructure that will accelerate COVID-19 testing:
- Clinicians will no longer need to receive approval from the state public health laboratory before submitting samples for patients within a broad range of criteria to allow for greater/more rapid testing.
- Clinicians can also submit a single nasal swab rather than both a nasal and throat swab, which will allow us to test more people throughout the day.

- New state guidance calls for MassHealth to cover the costs of both video- and telephone-based telehealth conferences between patients and doctors.
- Additionally, everyone on MassHealth will be able to acquire 90-day prescriptions and early refills, and the state will also expand hospital presumptive eligibility to any low-income patient that a provider suspects may have COVID-19.
- The Baker Administration has also set up a command center in Boston, where Health and Human Services Secretary Marylou Sudders will focus solely on leading planning and response to COVID-19. The center will have authority and discretion to tap whatever state funds are necessary. Priorities will include expanding the capac-

ity and distribution of testing, the allocation of personal protective equipment, surge hospital crisis capacity, scenario modeling and contingency planning and supply chain vulnerabilities.

Of course, this all comes in addition to the announcement on Friday that the Trump Administration has declared a national state of emergency, freeing up \$50 billion to help fight the pandemic. This declaration will allow FEMA to tap into these funds to mobilize personnel more quickly to help state and local agencies and leaders respond.

The Secretary of Health and Human Services has also been empowered to waive certain laws and regulations to ensure the virus can be contained and patients treated. This is funding and change is much needed in order to

increase testing and mitigate the spread of COVID-19.

- Finally, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health has announced that Massachusetts 2-1-1 will now provide real-time COVID-19 information, resources, and referrals in multiple languages. This expansion is the result of an increased investment in resources directed towards this 24-hour state-supported telephone hotline. This new service is in addition to a dedicated site mass.gov/covid19 which is updated daily with information and resources. Moving forward, please know that you can use this as a resource of up to date information from our public health officials.

SBA to provide small businesses impacted by Coronavirus up to \$2 Million in disaster assistance loans

SBA Administrator Jovita Carranza issued the following statement last Friday in response to the President’s address to the nation: “The President took bold, decisive action to make our 30 million small businesses more resilient to Coronavirus-related economic disruptions. Small businesses are vital economic engines in every community and state, and they have helped make our economy the strongest in the world. Our Agency will work directly with state Governors to provide targeted, low-interest disaster recovery loans to small businesses that have been severely impacted by the situation. Additionally,

the SBA continues to assist small businesses with counseling and navigating their own preparedness plans through our network of 68 District Offices and numerous Resource Partners located around the country. The SBA will continue to provide every small business with the most effective and customer-focused response possible during these times of uncertainty.”

Process for Accessing SBA’s Coronavirus (COVID-19) Disaster Relief Lending

- The U.S. Small Business Administration is offering designated states and territories low-interest feder-

al disaster loans for working capital to small businesses suffering substantial economic injury as a result of the Coronavirus (COVID-19). Upon a request received from a state’s or territory’s Governor, SBA will issue under its own authority, as provided by the Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act that was recently signed by the President, an Economic Injury Disaster Loan declaration.

- Any such Economic Injury Disaster Loan assistance declaration issued by the SBA makes loans available to small businesses and private, non-profit organi-

zations in designated areas of a state or territory to help alleviate economic injury caused by the Coronavirus (COVID-19).

- SBA’s Office of Disaster Assistance will coordinate with the state’s or territory’s Governor to submit the request for Economic Injury Disaster Loan assistance.
- Once a declaration is made for designated areas within a state, the information on the application process for Economic Injury Disaster Loan assistance will be made available to all affected communities.
- SBA’s Economic Injury Disaster Loans offer up to \$2 million in assistance and

can provide vital economic support to small businesses to help overcome the temporary loss of revenue they are experiencing.

- These loans may be used to pay fixed debts, payroll, accounts payable and other bills that can’t be paid because of the disaster’s impact. The interest rate is 3.75 percent for small businesses without credit available elsewhere; businesses with credit available elsewhere are not eligible. The interest rate for non-profits is 2.75 percent.
- SBA offers loans with long-term repayments in order to keep payments affordable, up to a maximum of 30 years. Terms are determined

on a case-by-case basis, based upon each borrower’s ability to repay.

- SBA’s Economic Injury Disaster Loans are just one piece of the expanded focus of the federal government’s coordinated response, and the SBA is strongly committed to providing the most effective and customer-focused response possible.

For additional information, contact the SBA disaster assistance customer service center. Call 1-800-659-2955 (TTY: 1-800-877-8339) or e-mail disastercustomerservice@sba.gov.

MBTA announces schedule revisions that started March 17

In response to coordinated efforts to slow the spread of COVID-19, the MBTA implemented several changes to service levels effective with the start of service on Tuesday, March 17.

These changes were made based on guidance from public health professionals and were developed according to several criteria that seek to protect the health and safety of MBTA employees and customers, as well as recent reductions in ridership. Acknowledging guidance that recommends people avoid large crowds, the MBTA is operating at levels that support social distancing.

“The MBTA plays an important role in slowing the spread of the coronavirus while continuing to provide critical services to medical

professionals and other employees in key industries that rely on public transit,” said MBTA General Manager Steve Poflak. “While some of these changes are inconvenient, they maintain a responsible balance between protecting the health and safety of the MBTA workforce and our customers, and our goal of continuing to run safe and reliable service without major disruptions.”

As this situation evolves, the MBTA will continue assessing ridership needs with a particular focus on workforce access for hospitals, as well as food distribution locations operated by the City of Boston. As part of that ongoing assessment, the T will continue monitoring customer volumes and make service adjustments accord-

ingly; this means if the T experiences an increase in ridership, capacity will be added as necessary.

A comprehensive list of schedule changes can be found at mbta.com/coronavirus.

RAPID TRANSIT:

- On the Blue Line, trains can be expected to arrive approximately every nine to 13 minutes. On the Orange Line, trains can be expected approximately every nine to 11 minutes.
- On the Red Line between Alewife and JFK/UMass Stations, trains can be expected to arrive approximately every seven minutes. Red Line trains on the Ashmont and Braintree branches will run approximately every 14 minutes.
- Green Line trolleys will

run every seven to 13 minutes on the branches, with more frequent service on the trunk.

BUS:

- MBTA buses will operate on a Saturday schedule with a number of exceptions. Select express bus routes 325, 326, 351, 352, 354, and 501 will operate according to regular weekday schedules.

FERRY:

- Ferry service will be cancelled until further notice. Ferry customers who board at the Hingham and Hull terminals are encouraged to use RB-0162” \t “_blank” West Hingham or Nantasket Junction Stations on the Greenbush Commuter Rail Line as an alternative.

COMMUTER RAIL:

- All Commuter Rail

lines will operate on reduced schedules, which can be found at mbta.com. On all lines, Commuter Rail schedules are being modified to support targeted periods of peak travel while providing options for off-peak travel throughout the day.

MATTAPAN LINE:

- The Mattapan Line will run trolley service approximately every 12 to 26 minutes.

THE RIDE:

- The MBTA will continue to operate full service on the RIDE. The MBTA encourages RIDE customers to plan their trips accordingly and follow the guidance of public health officials while in close contact with older adults or people with underlying health issues.

C H A R L I E C A R D STORE:

- The MBTA’s Charlie-Card Store is located at 7 Chauncy Street within Downtown Crossing Station. Normal hours of operation are 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. In the event that hours of operation change, customers should check MBTA.com for updated service hours.

In addition to encouraging good hygiene practices and social distancing, the MBTA is continuing its enhanced cleaning and disinfecting protocols, which includes:

- Disinfecting all fleet vehicles – buses, trolleys, subway cars, Commuter Rail coaches, ferries, and RIDE vehicles – every twenty-four hours.

Encore // CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

March 14 from the company. “The gaming areas will close beginning 5:59 a.m. on Sunday, March 15. All other non-gaming operations will cease beginning midnight on Sunday. The Company will pay all full-time employees during this period as it evaluates the impact of the temporary closure. A limited number of employees and management will remain at the resort to secure, sanitize and maintain the facility. The health and welfare of our guests and employees has been our primary concern throughout this health crisis.”

The MGC logged a unanimous vote in an emergency special meeting on Saturday to discuss the closure of all three casino-properties.

“The Massachusetts Gaming Commission voted unanimously to temporarily suspend operation at the state’s three casino properties, including Encore Boston Harbor, MGM Springfield and Plainridge Park Casino,” read a statement from the MGC. “In response to the coronavirus pandemic, the decision was made in collaboration and cooperation with our licensees to safeguard the health and well-being of casino guests, employees, and regulators.

“We are all doing our best to appropriately and thoughtfully respond to this

highly complex and unprecedented set of circumstances and uncertainties,” the statement continued. “United in a shared goal of preventing the spread of infection, the MGC and our licensees view this immediate mitigation measure as our social responsibility to prioritize the health and safety of one another above all else.”

The MGC said they will remain in close contact with licensees during the shutdown and will consult with government and health officials to determine what is a safe time to resume operations. At the moment, the MGC has decided to re-assess the situation in two weeks.

On Monday, a special meeting of the MGC reported that all closing operations had gone smoothly.

Mayor Carlo DeMaria applauded the closure and the “tough decision” that was made.

“I applaud the MGC and Encore Boston Harbor for making the tough decision to close the casino temporarily,” he said. “The health and well-being of Encore’s staff and patrons are paramount. Social distancing is the best way to flatten the curve of this pandemic. As a community, we will persist.”

With all of the above, however, that concluded a

fairly rocky few days at casino properties, especially Encore.

On Thursday evening, the state Department of Public Health (DPH) reported guest who was at the Encore Boston Harbor on March 5 was reported to have come down with the COVID-19 virus, though he was low-risk and without symptoms while there, according to DPH.

Encore, at the time, said it was being vigilant despite the “low-risk” designation and had notified employees at the resort who had direct contact with the person. Those employees have been take precautionary measures, and those employees have been place on paid leave.

Spokesman Eric Kraus said they have taken a substantial amount of safety preparedness, and will continue to do so.

“We’ve further reflected on the responsibility that businesses such as Wynn Resorts must play during a time like this,” said CEO Matt Maddox in a statement. “In combination with what my team has learned through our meetings with our public health consultants and officials, I’ve recognized we need to temporarily implement fundamental changes to our business.”

A number of employees continued to work regular

shifts through Thursday, Friday and Saturday – and at least one restaurant worker said it was an intense time.

The worker, who was kept anonymous for this article to protect his employment, said he was very nervous working a final shift on Saturday.

“It was a great idea for them to close it,” he said. “They should have shut down as soon as Walt Disney World shut down. Disney never shuts down, and they should have shut down immediately. I had to work a shift on Saturday, and that was my last day. We were worried there would be a lot of people, but most people stopped coming. It was supposed to be busy through the weekend, but a lot of people started canceling.

“Once the governor said there couldn’t be more than 250 people, that changed a lot,” he continued. “We have that many workers on shifts at that very time – never mind the customers coming in.”

The worker said he was relieved – as were all his co-workers – that they would continue to get paid during the shutdown.

“As long as we’re getting paid, it should be okay for us to get by,” he said. “I think it’s going to be longer than two weeks, though...I’m just really glad they closed be-

cause I didn’t want to end up getting sick. We all breathe the same air whether we’re in a restaurant or on a casino floor. I’m glad they closed and we are staying home.”

Councilor Mike McLaughlin said he was also glad they closed the facility, and he had been calling for that since Thursday. He said he was the first elected official in Everett to call for the shutdown, and primarily out of concern for workers at the resort.

“As soon as I learned of the positive case at the Resort from a visitor in early March, I quickly continued to call on Encore to take appropriate action immediately to protect its employees, guest and vendors,” he said. “It was my belief from the beginning that Encore should have closed their facility for the betterment of all. I am thankful the MGC heard the concerns and unanimously voted to ensure the safety of guests, employees and vendors at Encore by taking a positive vote of closure.”

McLaughlin said he was disappointed at how a spokesman for Encore characterized his early calls for the resort to close for thorough cleaning.

“I found it disturbing, then, as I do now that the spokesperson for Encore Boston Harbor made a state-

ment to Fox 25 news that I was misinformed,” he said. “There was nothing to be misinformed about when there was a positive case of the coronavirus at your facility. It was time to take appropriate action to close the facility and keep everyone safe.”

Encore officials had been trying to keep the resort safe and keep open for business as long as possible to protect the jobs and livelihoods of the employees, they said on Friday afternoon.

That was accomplished by a combination of measures that included screening the temperatures of guests using thermal cameras at all entrances, and putting more distance between dining tables and gaming stations/seats at the casino.

However, even those measures were not enough by Saturday when the MGC and state government decided the best course of action for safety was a total shutdown.

On Monday, Wynn Resorts announced the temporary closure of its properties on the Las Vegas Strip as well.

This is the second wave of casino closures for the Wynn company, as they had to shutter their Macau properties for 15 days in January and February due to concerns over the coronavirus in China.

Council will seek damages for Fire Station construction delay

By Laura Plummer

On Monday, March 9, City Council was expecting to hear from a representative of the Everett Fire Department on the redevelopment of the Central Fire Station.

Instead, it received a stack of photos.

The station at 384 Broadway has been under renovation since spring of last year. The Everett Fire Department has since been operating out of its two other locations on Hancock and Ferry streets. Construction has far exceeded initial timeframes, leaving some councilors and residents frustrated.

Councilor Fred Capone had requested updates on the fire station, including any progress made, work remaining and a schedule for completion. Instead, Fire Chief Anthony Carli sent Council a 13-page packet containing 12 pages of photos with no captions or descriptions, and one page with a small timeline.

APC Construction Company was awarded the project in April 2019. The timeline shows that the majority of the work was supposed to be completed by October 2019. Almost half a year later, the company still needs to install masonry, remove shoring, fabricate

and install overhead doors, clear debris, waterproof, and replace the apron. In addition, electrical upgrades are dependent upon National Grid work slated for mid-April.

The contractor's new projected completion date is May 7, but it is unclear how the COVID-19 outbreak could affect this. Boston recently declared a moratorium on construction projects, and that is likely to filter into Everett, too — though nothing had been declared from City officials by press time March 17.

Seth McCullough, of the Local 143 Everett Firefighters Union, expressed frustration over not being able

to return to the Central Fire Station.

"We're delaying our response times by not being there," he told Council. "I'm worried about what else is going to delay [progress]."

McCullough said the union was in the dark regarding the renovation, and thanked Council for bringing up the matter.

"Information hasn't been shared with the union," he said. "We just want to be on the same page."

Councilors shared the union's concerns around the setbacks.

"It's unacceptable that it takes 18 days to receive and install a door, a month for simple electrical work and a month to release paperwork," said Councilor Stephanie Martins, referencing the timeline. "This is unacceptable when it comes to first-responders for a city. We should evaluate APC Construction and the quality of bids we're approving."

"You can tell a building is not moving forward when they don't take the labels out of the windows," said Councilor Wayne Matewsky. "It looks terrible. We're not happy with this project. They've ripped the City off."

The councilman added that construction equipment is still blocking street access.

"This has been a disgrace," he continued. "I go by there every day, and it's disgusting. There's nobody even cleaning the windows."

"This is a safety issue," said Council President Rosa DiFlorio. "Clearly we're well behind the contract date. There's going to be damages from this contractor."

The matter was referred to the Fire Chief, the Planning Department and the City's Chief Financial Officer.

OBITUARIES

CHURCH News

Angelina Ragucci

Sexton Can Co. retiree

Angelina (Carpenito) Ragucci of Everett entered into eternal rest on Sunday, March 15 in the Care Dimensions Hospice House in Lincoln. She was 93 years old.

Born in Avellino, Italy, Angelina lived in Everett for 65 years. She worked as a machinist at the former Sexton Can Company in Everett.

She was the beloved wife of the late Carmine L. Ragucci, dear and devoted mother of Carmela Navarra of Everett, Roberta Salvo and her husband, Paul of Stoneham, John Ragucci and his wife, Joanne of Danvers and Albert Ragucci of Everett; sister of Tonino Carpenito of Venezuela and late Gina Zuzzolo and Romildo and Marino Carpenito; loving "Nonna" of Jerry Navarra, Angela and her husband, Richard Cucchiello, Paul and Cristina Salvo, Adam and his wife,



Amy Ragucci and Raia Ragucci.

As a result of the ongoing Covid-19 health crisis and with genuine concern for the people they love, Angelina's family will gather for private services. A Memorial Mass will be celebrated in July for Angelina and her husband, Carmine. In lieu of flowers, contributions in Angelina's memory to the Alzheimer's Association, 309 Waverley Oaks Road, Waltham, MA 02452 would be sincerely appreciated.

Arrangements are by the Cafasso & Sons Funeral Home, Everett.

Our Parish Staff: Father Joseph Chacha Marwa, S.M.A. Administrator; Father Ernest Egbedike, S.M.A. Parochial Vicar; Secretary Barbara Cannon

Weekly Mass Schedule at Immaculate Conception is as follows:

Saturday (Sunday Vigil) 4:00 p.m., Sunday 7:00 a.m., 9:00 a.m. (Family Mass), 11:00 a.m., and 5:30

p.m.

12:15 p.m. Spanish Community

4:00 p.m. Haitian Community

Masses are being held in the Chapel.

Eucharistic Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament: Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament is held every Thursday from 7:45 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. in the Chapel. Each Thursdays' adoration

Glendale United Methodist Church

News and Notes

Glendale United Methodist Church is open to all and we welcome people of all faiths, race, nationalities and sexual preference. No one is ever turned away. If you are looking for a new home church, we would like you to check us out and let us know what we can do to make church a better fit in your life.

Bible Study: Consider joining us for Bible study on Sunday. We meet in the Church Parlor off the Chapel from 9:30 to 10:00 a.m.

Sponsor the bulletin! For a \$5 donation, you can dedicate the Sunday bulletin to recognize family, friends, or special occasions. There is a sign-up sheet in the Pastor's study. Feel free to choose your particular week and

leave a copy of your dedication in the mail in that is on the Pastor's door. Please contact the Pastor if you have any questions.

Boy Scout Troop 814: Meet in Cooper Hall on Tuesday evenings from 6-9 p.m. Cub Pack 11 meets on Saturday mornings.

NA Meetings – Mon. Bring Your Own Book 7:30 – 9:30 p.m.; Thurs. I Can't But We Can, 8:00 7:30 – 9:30 p.m.

AA Meeting – Saturday evenings from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Pastor's Office Hours: Saturdays 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Other times by appointment.

Bread of Life Donations – This outreach is being done to honor the United Methodist Women's Group, who for

will conclude the Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament at 6:30 p.m. All are invited to spend a few moments with Our Blessed Lord

Bring a Book-Buy a Book - We have a new Fundraiser Program in the back of the Church. It's called Bring a Book-Buy a Book. All books are a dollar and any money collected will go towards our Stain

Glass Fund. Brink a Book and Buy a Book and make a donation. Our selections are great and varied. Please stop by the table and see what we have. Thank you

Immaculate Conception Parish
489 Broadway
Everett, Mass 02149
Phone 617-389-5660

Mystic Side Congregational Church

News and Notes

Mystic Side Congregational Church is located in Everett, on Malden-Everett border, at 422 Main Street. We offer a warm, inviting atmosphere, and all are welcome. Our Sunday Church service starts at 10:30 a.m. and Communion is offered on the first Sunday of each month. A very pleasant coffee hour and socializing follow our services. Parking is available in our lot next to the church on Wyllis Ave. (one way off Main Street). We look forward to welcoming you this Sunday.

Grace Episcopal Church

News and Notes

Grace Anglican Episcopal Church is open & welcoming to all.

There are 3 services on Sundays: 10am English, 1pm South Sudanese (Dinka) and 3pm Haitian Creole. We have Sunday school at the 1pm service in the Children's Room. Coffee Hour starts after the 10am service in the Parish Hall (entrance is on 11 Liberty St.)

Holy Week Services: Maundy Thursday, April 9, 6p to 7p

Good Friday, April 10, 5:30p to 7p

Easter Sunday, April 12, 10a, 1p, 3p

Come all and let us walk together in this Season of hope, renewal and new beginnings.

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Glendale Christian Lighthouse Church

News and Notes

Adult Sunday School at 9:30 AM. Teaching about Holiness .

Sunday 10:30 AM Worship service.

Wednesday hour of Power, worship, prayer and Bible Study. We are studying about God, come join us.

Come join us in prayer every Friday at 6 am.

Saturday, 12-3, Women's Fellowship. Join our sisters in worship, fellowship and prayer.

"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not

for human masters," Colossians 3:23

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Servicio de Alabanza y Adoracion a las 10 am (en inglés)

• Miercoles Hora de Poder, Oración, alabanza y Estudio de la Palabra de Dios a las 7 pm (en inglés)

• Ven unete a nosotros para orar todos los viernes

a las 6 am

• Domingo Servicio de alabanza y adoracion a las 4pm (Servicio en español)

Mayores informes de los servicios en español (617) 306-3518

"No temas, porque yo estoy contigo; no desmayes, porque yo soy tu Dios que te esfuerzo; siempre te ayudaré, siempre te sustentaré con la diestra de mi justicia."

Isaias 41:10

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When she was a young college student, Elisabeth Marra had a serious motorcycle accident that ultimately changed her life. Two years after the crash, her painful open fractures had failed to heal. Then she heard about a new and complex surgery pioneered by a surgeon who used a patient's own stem cells to concentrate the healing process. This time, her surgery and subsequent therapy were successful.

Elisabeth's experience caused her to re-direct her own career aspirations. Inspired by the medical professionals who helped her reclaim her active lifestyle, she changed her major to study physical therapy—a profession where her own experience could help other patients prevail through difficult recoveries.

We tell Elisabeth Marra's story here to illustrate two of the most profound messages we know. Don't give up, and remember to give back. If reading it inspires just one more person to achieve something special, then its telling here has been well worth while.

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Sociedad Latina seeks a Steam Team Coordinator for their Umana - East Boston site. If interested, Send Resume & Cover Letter to juan@sociedadlatina.org or apply through www.sociedadlatina.org/careers. 3/26

GENERAL HELP: Full time or Part time available -Mon-Fri 8 to 4. Laborer needed for Marina Service Dept. Winthrop. We are willing to train right candidate, mechanical experience helpful but not necessary. Please call 617-846-1100 ask for Lloyd. 3/25

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Ocean Beach surfer and local surf legend Steve Bettis was diagnosed with MS in 2006. Although surfing is still central to his life, he hasn't been able to get out on the water in 15 years. For a man whose daily routine always included a few waves, more than a decade out of the surf is just too long. This is why the National MS Society teamed up with his buddy Robert "Ringside" Weaver and used virtual reality to get Steve back on his wave. See their experience and find out how you can share yours at WeAreStrongerThanMS.org. Together We Are Stronger.

MS
National Multiple Sclerosis Society

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A SHORT STORY ABOUT GROWING UP WITH AN UNFAIR ADVANTAGE.

POLIO.

As one of the last American children to contract polio, Jeffrey Galpin grew up in a world of iron lungs and body casts, alone with his imagination. His story would be dramatic enough if it was just about his battle with this dreaded disease.

But Jeffrey Galpin did more than survive polio. He went on to a list of achievements in medical research—including being the principal investigator in applying the first gene therapy for HIV/AIDS.

Dr. Galpin actually credits his own incurable condition for giving him the focus that made him so passionate in his research. His story leaves us with two of the most contagious messages we know. Don't give up, and remember to give back. If Dr. Galpin's story inspires just one more person to make a difference, then its telling here has been well worth while.

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ER Docs, major hospitals preparing for potential surge of patients

By Seth Daniel

Numerous public gatherings, meetings and conferences were abruptly cancelled over the last 10 days, and at the same time, major hospitals in the area were preparing for a potential surge of Coronavirus (COVID-19) cases – all this while financial markets in the United States and abroad show instability and unprecedented travel restrictions took effect last weekend.

At Boston Medical Center (BMC), numerous precautions were implemented in the past week to prepare for a surge of patients from Greater Boston neighborhoods and elsewhere – it being one of the few Trauma I medical facilities in New England.

Outside the emergency room at BMC on Albany Street, a temporary medical tent was been set up in preparation for triage – if need be.

“BMC is planning for a surge in patients, as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to evolve rapidly,” said David Kibbe, a spokesman for BMC. “BMC has set up a tent outside the hospital to prepare for potential scenarios related to COVID-19. While the tent is currently only being used for drills, it could be used as a testing location or additional Emergency Department space should we get a large number of patients requiring screening and testing for COVID-19.”

While those preparations are playing out, there is also concern in the medical community for adequate supplies at hospitals like BMC.

“We have adequate personal protective equipment supplies on hand for our staff,” said Kibbe. “Given the worldwide impact of this outbreak, we share the concern across health care about potential shortages of medical supplies, including N95 respirators. To ensure that we are able to protect our staff and provide safe care for patients, BMC has taken steps to conserve personal protective equipment, including N95 respirators, surgical masks and precaution gowns.”

Already, two weeks ago, the hospital had restricted employee travel.

Patients at BMC or its health centers, under federal guidelines, are being asked if they have had a fever or cough or having traveled in the last 30 days. They are also asked if they have had any close contact with a confirmed COVID-19 case. These questions are asked during a phone call or during an appointment.

“For any patient considered at risk for COVID-19, clinicians will undertake actions to protect the patient, hospital staff, and other hospital patients,” read their website. “This includes putting the patient in a private room and providing masks for both the patient and care team. Staff has undergone training for possible cases of COVID-19, and BMC regularly conducts staff drills and training for infectious diseases.”

State Rep. (and doctor) Jon Santiago works in the BMC emergency room (ER) and also serves in the legislature representing the South End and Lower Rox-



Major hospitals like Boston Medical Center (BMC), are preparing this week for a potential surge in patients with coronavirus. Here, outside the emergency room, they have set up a triage and testing tent to aid in any potential surge. Right now, it is being used for drills, but is being prepared for real use.

bury.

He worked in the ER last weekend, and will continue to work shifts every weekend in March. Uniquely, he will be treating patients on the frontlines in the ER, and also thinking about legislation to address the emerging, multiple challenges associated with what is now a medical pandemic.

“As an ER doctor and an elected official, my oaths to protect the public is no more important than now,” he said.

“I do know it’s going to get significantly worse before it gets better,” he said. “We’ve had a sluggish federal response. Medically, right now we really have to summon out the best in each of us and empower our neighbors and communities and let them know there are things you can do to protect yourself. It can be things like washing your hands. If you’re sick, please stay home. If you’re an older person with chronic diseases like diabetes or lung problems, you

should be particularly cautious. Likewise, if you are a young, healthy person and have especially mild symptoms or no symptoms, it would behoove you to take precautions also because it will be those folks who will be transmitting the disease, maybe in a careless fashion.”

From a public policy perspective, Santiago said he and others are working on several measures. One is how to legislate in a safe fashion so that the virus isn’t transmitted during lawmaking sessions.

“I am sitting on an internal working group right now,” he said. “We are looking at our approach to legislating in these trying times.”

He noted the State Legislature approved a \$15 million bill to provide more emergency funding for coronavirus responses statewide late last week.

The federal government announced a second round of emergency funding by the Centers for Disease

Control (CDC) on March 11. While Massachusetts already received \$500,000 in federal funding, the state will also receive an additional \$11.46 million in federal funds from the CDC. The CDC has instructed state health officers to move forward with distributing that money immediately to those on the frontlines.

“Our state, local, tribal and territorial public health partners are on the front lines of the COVID-19 response. The action we are taking today will continue to support their efforts to increase public health capacity where it’s needed most,” said CDC Director Robert R. Redfield, M.D. “These funds will allow public health leaders to implement critical steps necessary to contain and mitigate spread of the virus in communities across the country.”

Like that, seemingly, everything was on hold or in a holding pattern.

For those looking to stay healthy, BMC indicated a few simple things everyone can do:

- Cover your sneezes and coughs with your sleeve, not your hand.
- Wash your hands frequently to reduce the spread of germs. Wash with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, you can use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- If you feel sick, stay home, and avoid travel.
- Avoid close contact with people with flu-like symptoms whenever possible.

Vulnerable

populations need to be considered as outbreak spreads

While many are thinking about schools, public gathers and civic meetings when it comes to the spread of the coronavirus, some medical professionals are beginning to be concerned about precautions in the homeless community, the jails and homeless shelters.

Emergency Room doctor and State Rep. Jon Santiago said he is concerned about how hospitals like Boston Medical Center (BMC) might be able to help those populations if there is an outbreak.

“BMC Emergency Room is the largest ER in town,” he said. “We see a number of disproportionately impacted communities and homeless folks. As a physician, we need to be extremely cognizant of how we educate these patients and making sure they have safe places to go. I would like to know what our homeless shelters are doing. What about the jails? I wonder if undocumented immigrants feel safe enough to seek care, or if they might be scared ICE will pick them up.”

Right now, the response is very new, and what is happening with vulnerable populations is not necessarily being discussed yet.

“These are people that live in close quarters,” said Santiago. “They are also people who are already suffering from a whole host of diseases. It’s going to be challenging for sure. I do have faith in our doctors and nurses and public health officials.”

School // CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

and health of students, families and teachers with every decision I was to make.

“That was a huge moment,” she continued. “I’m not going to lie. Being the first city to call off was not an easy one. The decision came down to the people of Everett and what having to do what we needed to do. We knew we needed to do something.”

The result was Everett was the first large district to close down its schools in the wake of the fast-moving COVID-19 outbreak on Thursday – with the closure starting Friday. In that moment, there was contradictory advice – even from the federal and state government – with some saying closing entire school districts wasn’t the right approach. There were also many who said countries that closed schools early had better results in containing the outbreak.

Many districts did not close schools, including Boston and Chelsea. Later, on Friday, Chelsea did close when they had a potential case of the virus emerge in one of their middle schools.

However, Boston did not finally make the decision until late on Friday.

There was no easy answer.

“We just knew something needed to be done and we decided to take action,” she said. “On Friday night, when I got home and Boston followed suit, it was a relief. It’s nice to not be out on a limb, but we needed to do something. We wanted to protect Everett students, families and staff. It proved to have been a good move.”

One thing that did make it easier, she said, was the support of Mayor Carlo DeMaria in being decisive about closing down City Hall and City buildings. No other municipalities had taken such an action either.

“The mayor came out very clear that all public buildings should close and canceled all public meetings,” she said. “For students we were thinking two weeks didn’t seem like enough time...That was a very bold move for him to make.”

Tahiliani said another reason they closed so far into April was she wanted

families to be able to put together contingency plans for childcare and work over the long-term. She said they could always re-evaluate and scale things back if that is possible, but she didn’t want to continue every two weeks putting families in a planning spiral.

Right now, staff members from the custodial department are beginning to deep clean and sanitize all the buildings. After the closure, Tahiliani said they left the buildings to sit idle, as there was evidence that the COVID-19 virus can only exist on many surfaces for a maximum of three days. With that waiting period over, the staff began to work in each of the buildings and will continue to do so over the next several weeks.

At the same time, the schools are beginning to transition into online learning. Live, online tools were posted to the school website on Tuesday, and paper packets of homework by grade-level are available Monday through Friday from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the Meals to Go program at

Everett High.

“Right now, it’s less about internet access (as there is free internet now through Comcast for students) and more about getting devices to students,” she said. “We’re doing inventory of all our devices now and we’ll see about the idea of checking them out to families of students who need them.”

There is a letter going out this week, and online materials for students are beginning to be posted. She said it is also a time for everyone in the City – whether private individuals or school employees – to begin to think how to use technology better.

“I do think it is a good time for us all to begin to know how to be more technologically savvy,” she said. “I think K-12 education is a place we don’t utilize technology as well as we should. This provides us a great opportunity to do that.”

Along those same lines, she said when and if things normalize, it will be time to address having computers for all students in Everett

Seniors set to lose out on many opportunities due to COVID-19

Seniors in the Everett High Class of 2020 will go down as an historic class living through unprecedented times, but they likely will also miss a lot of cherished moments they have anticipated for many years.

Already, many things have been canceled for seniors – including the National Honor Society ceremony, the SAT test last Saturday, the spring music and vocal performance series, and several important scholarship deadlines. An important theatrical competition was canceled last weekend, as well as things like the Adams Scholarship Banquet and the Art Fair.

Right now, things like prom and spring sports (such as baseball and softball) are not yet canceled, but with so much unknown at the moment, they could eventually be. It figures to be a senior class that could lose out on a lot of senior moments.

“These things are a really important part of the high school experience,” she said. “I can’t imagine how it feels now to be a senior at EHS. We are going to do everything we can to make sure our students get not just MCAS and scholarship opportunities and graduation, but we’ll be sensitive to the other parts of the social emotional components of the senior experience. Those experiences may look different. I don’t know if we’ll have prom in the summer, but I know we are committed to making sure our seniors get what they’ve worked hard for.”

She said spring sports are still on, though postponed, but they are re-assessing all the time.

“Decisions on things like sports will be made by superintendents together,” she said. “It won’t be something where it’s just Everett missing out on something.”

Public Schools – a standard the district has been slower to adopt than other districts around Everett.

“Definitely, 100 percent, that has been a conversation we have been having,” she said.

She said perhaps they could have such technology for the students to keep at school, and then if there is a situation like this, those devices at school could easily be taken home for distance learning.

However, right now, she said she is anticipating the creativity of the teachers in Everett – with many of them already proposing interesting and innovative ideas.

“Teachers have a lot of interesting ideas,” she said. “They are probably already doing things that we haven’t asked them to do. I imagine

there will be an opportunity to look at innovative things teachers might have been doing before this and are continuing to do now. These are things maybe we could all learn from.”

Processing the entirety of the events from the past seven days, Tahiliani said it wasn’t what she expected in her first two weeks on the job, but it certainly proved to her that she made the right call in coming to Everett.

“All things considered, I’m still very, very happy that I started on March 1 when I did,” she said.

“You learn a lot about a place when you’re in a situation like this,” she said. “What I learned is Everett is an amazing community and people are concerned for each other.”

STAY IN AND TAKE OUT

HELP LOCAL BUSINESSES WHILE STAYING IN

Deliveries ★ Takeouts ★ Home Services

During this crisis, here are some Everett resources.

Consider taking out an ad to and to promote your business at this time, there are many people in Everett who do not go online and use the newspaper for most of their neighborhood information.

WE'RE OFFERING THIS SPECIAL PAGE AS A RESOURCE FOR ALL SERVICES IN TOWN THAT PEOPLE MIGHT NEED WHILE STAYING IN.

FULL-PRINT EDITION WILL BE AVAILABLE ONLINE WEDNESDAY

THE SPECIAL IS A BUSINESS CARD AD FOR 2 WEEKS FOR \$80

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