

**AN URGENT CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) MESSAGE
FROM THE ALFRED HEALTH OFFICER**

President Trump on March 13, 2020 declared a “National Emergency” in an effort to address the spread of coronavirus (Covid-19) within our country and the world whereby more monies are available for agencies with responsibilities to engage in this matter without impediment. There is however only so much that the government can do. Ultimately, the success and of stopping the spread of this virus and time to do so is dependent entirely on us all. We all have a role to play and that role in my opinion is best described as a social responsibility. Our success in doing so is entirely dependent by acting now upon on what we know about this virus:

1. Covid-19 is believed to be a virus that has little ability to survive in the environment for a long time.
2. Asymptomatic (infected but not clinically sick) people can spread the disease.

The fact that Covid-19 persists in the environment for a short time is a good thing and is central to the actions undertaken to control the spread of the virus across this country and world. Covid-19 has been confirmed in the State of Maine and we all need to engage in efforts to confine Covid-19 to those areas and stop the further spread of the virus among the individuals residing in that community. In my opinion, our success in doing so rests entirely upon the citizens of the community – social responsibility.

The fact that asymptomatic individuals can spread this disease is truly a bad situation and really complicates our efforts in controlling the spread of Covid-19. This challenge rests entirely upon us – social responsibility. Our present understanding is that people are the sole vector of this disease. The spread of this disease and the time in which it continues to spread is dependent on us. In my opinion, our social responsibility is:

1. Upon development of clinical symptoms, immediately undertake self-quarantine to your household and consult your physician as to what is the appropriate medical treatment for you. Give particular consideration as to whom also resides with you as well as to whom you have been in contact – senior citizens and medically compromised individuals.
2. Avoid traveling to communities where Covid-19 has been confirmed.
3. Avoid traveling in confined areas with groups of other people – airplanes, trains and buses.
4. When traveling and within our community employ the principles of disease control that are central to this virus – good hygiene (handwashing) and “social distancing”.
5. Within our households – practice good hygiene and good household sanitation principles. Pay particular attention to the air quality of your household – promote air exchange. This is a time of the year when household air is dry (humidity) and particularly in those heating with wood. Maintain your household humidity to 40 to 50%. Do not tolerate respiratory irritants to persist in your household air and those irritants include smoke, dust and common cleaning agents.
6. Many of the products we commonly use for handwashing and household sanitation are now in short supply. However, we can still adequately accomplish these tasks. The product we wash our hands with is not nearly important as the duration we spend in washing our hands. A thorough hand wash with normal hand soap will be adequate. Clorox in a 1 to 9 dilution is an effective sanitizer. Clorox though is a severe respiratory irritant and is to be used when there is adequate air exchange.
7. This is a time to truly practice our social responsibilities to those residing with us as

well as our neighbors. Identify those who are at high risks (seniors and those compromised with medical conditions) and be in contact and prepared to offer assistance.

The Town of Alfred has a role to play in this effort and has initiated a number of changes in which the business and services provided at the Town House are to be conducted as well as closure of some Town facilities of concern. The day to day work of Town Government will be accomplished but it will be done differently. The details in this regard are posted elsewhere on the Town website.

I welcome and thank the citizens of Alfred for their cooperation and support in this attempt to prevent the spread of Covid-19 to our community. I ask you to appreciate that threat of Covid-19 is a changing situation, and these are the actions that I am now suggesting and they are subject to change in response to what I come to know as we move forward. The following link below is provided as resource where you may find a wealth of additional information:

[Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#)

Sincerely,

Dennis M. Brewster, DVM

Health Officer – Town of Alfred