March 2, 2020

To: Aging Services Network Partners
From: Secretary Elizabeth Chen
Subject: Guidance on Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Dear Aging Services Network Partners & Staff,

Massachusetts continues to prepare for the potential outbreak of the novel coronavirus, COVID-19, that originated in Wuhan, Hubei, China. The risk of COVID-19 in the Commonwealth is low; in contrast, the risk of flu is high.

Commissioner Monica Bharel and her team at the Department of Public Health have been in constant contact with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and state and local partners, and launched a site that includes extensive information and is a “source of truth” at: mass.gov/2019coronavirus. It is updated with more information on a regular basis. The fact sheets available are translated in multiple languages and can be printed and shared. These simple precautions will help prevent the spread of the flu and other respiratory illnesses:

- Cover your mouth when you cough or sneeze, using a tissue or the inside of your elbow
- Wash your hands for 20 seconds with soap and warm water frequently and use hand sanitizer
- If you have a fever or feel sick, stay home and call your healthcare provider
- Get the flu vaccine – it is not too late!

To date, there has been one confirmed case of Coronavirus in Massachusetts; there have been more than 30,000 confirmed cases of the flu. The risk for coronavirus in the Commonwealth remains low; the risk for the flu is high.

EOEA is following the guidance provided by the Department of Public Health (DPH) relative to COVID-19.

- Find more information on the flu and where to get a flu vaccine here: https://www.mass.gov/info-details/what-should-i-know-about-flu

EOEA will continue to monitor both CDC and DPH recommendations and will provide more guidance as appropriate.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Chen