

# **New Bedford increasing health measures at senior living facilities, nursing homes, and lodging houses**

New Bedford, Massachusetts – Mayor Jon Mitchell and the Board of Health have acted to protect residents including seniors in New Bedford, announcing stringent measures on wellness checks, quarantining, and isolation requirements for senior living facilities and nursing homes, as well as lodging houses, in New Bedford.

Mayor Mitchell's proposal was approved unanimously by an emergency meeting of the Board of Health on Monday night and signed by the Mayor and Board.

Effective last night, the City requires managers of senior living facilities and nursing homes implement mandatory, strict health-based requirements for all staff members, including taking the temperatures of all facility staff members each day upon arrival to work, and before departure to work, and immediately sending home any staff member with a fever.

The City is also requiring that senior living facilities and nursing homes conduct regular wellness checks of all residents including phone calls or door checks, depending on the type of facility, and notification to the Health Department and resident's emergency contact if there is an inability to confirm the resident's wellness.

Stringent hygiene and sanitation precautions have been ordered at all senior living facilities and nursing homes. Managers of the facilities are required to ensure all staff are performing

handwashing with soap, water, and/or alcohol-based hand rub before and after contact with any patient or resident, contact with any potentially infectious material, and before putting on or removing persona protective equipment, such as gloves.

Lodging houses have similarly been ordered to screen all potential guests seeking lodging for COVID-19 symptoms including by taking their temperature, taking the temperature of staff and sending them home with a fever, and frequently cleaning and disinfecting public spaces, high-touch items and surfaces. Any potential guest with symptoms or a fever may only be provided if it is possible to give the potential guest a private bedroom and private bathroom.

Violation of any provision of the City's order may result in a \$500 per day fine for each violation.

Mayor Mitchell declared a state of emergency in New Bedford on March 13 due to the COVID-19 outbreak and has acted to enforce social distancing measures, including the closure of personal care businesses and playgrounds, to protect public health during the state of emergency.