**“Novel Coronavirus”**

**2019-nCoV**

As many of you are aware there is a heightened focus on “Novel Coronavirus,” which has officially been named by the Center of Disease Controls (CDC) as 2019-nCoV. The CDC is providing daily updates and recommendations that may be accessed at https://www.cdc.gov

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health has compiled a Novel Coronavirus Fact Sheet that may be accessed at the following link: https://www.mass.gov/resource/information-on-the-outbreak-of-coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19

Additionally The Providers Council has created the following site with useful information: <https://providers.org/coronavirus/>

Finally, The Lowell Health Department has an informative website: <https://www.lowell.k12.ma.us/…/Coronavirus%20Lowell%20Preve…>

Coronaviruses are respiratory viruses and are generally spread from person-person, when an infected person coughs or sneezes, similar to the flu. The symptoms of this infection include:

* Fever
* Cough
* Difficulty Breathing

While this is a public health concern, the CDC continues to report that the immediate risk to the general public remains low at this time. However the concern for infectious disease is always a something we take very seriously, therefore we ask that you take the following measures:

* Practice good hygiene: Wash your hands often and thoroughly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands. Use alcohol based hand sanitizer when soap and water are not available.
* When coughing and sneezing, cover your mouth and nose with a tissue. You can also cough or sneeze into your sleeve. Throw used tissues in the trash and immediately wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
* Avoid sharing drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, dishes, towels or other items. Wash these items thoroughly with soap and water after use.
* Avoid close contact with people who are sick whenever possible.
* Practice other good health habits: Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces at home or at work especially when someone is ill.
* It is important to stay home from work when you are ill.

The Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) is an evolving situation that we are following closely and will continue to update you as the information is shared with us. This general information applies to all and we anticipate that in the days ahead there may be more specific information related to classrooms and residential programs.