



# The Daily Free Press

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**CITY, CORONAVIRUS, NEWS**

## Massachusetts sees first confirmed case of coronavirus

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by Angela Yang

**T**he 2019 novel coronavirus has come to Massachusetts. State officials confirmed a Boston man who had returned from Wuhan, China tested positive for the virus.

The man, a student at University of Massachusetts Boston, sought medical care after returning to the U.S. on Friday, according to a press release Saturday from the Boston Public Health Commission.

He is currently in isolation at his home until public health officials clear him, and the few individuals he has had close contact with — which include household members and medical personnel — are being monitored for symptoms.

BPHC medical director Jennifer Lo confirmed in a media conference call Saturday the student is not being held in a dorm on campus and has not participated in any university activities since his arrival in Boston. The BPHC is continuing to investigate the number of people he has come into contact with.

“At this time, we have a very limited number of people that were exposed,” Lo said. “But it’s an ongoing investigation, so I can’t give a specific number.”

Larry Madoff, medical director of the state Department of Public Health Bureau of Infectious Disease and Laboratory Sciences, said in the conference call the decision to quarantine the patient in his personal home was made after taking into account factors such as the type of illness, the way it is spread and the level of severity it has shown in the patient.

“It’s safer to isolate a patient at home rather than exposing a hospital population,” Madoff said. “We know that respiratory viruses do spread in a hospital setting.”

This is the eighth case of the coronavirus in the U.S., and BPHC Executive Director Rita Nieves stated in the press release that the risk remains low in Massachusetts despite the state’s first case of the illness.

“Right now, we are not asking Boston residents to do anything differently,” Nieves stated. “And we continue to be confident we are in a good position to respond to this developing situation.”

Boston University Student Health Services sent an email to the student body Tuesday stating no cases had been confirmed on campus. SHS advised students to get flu vaccines and be cautious when in contact with someone feeling ill.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention notified Massachusetts public health officials of the man’s positive test results Friday, the same day the White House declared the outbreak a public health emergency. According to a White House press briefing, the government has ordered a 14-day mandatory quarantine for all Americans who had been in the Hubei province, where Wuhan is located, in the past two weeks.

The World Health Organization had declared the coronavirus a global health emergency Thursday, when the CDC also confirmed the virus is transmitted via human-to-human contact after the U.S. saw its first case spread between two individuals within the country.

Earlier this week, the CDC announced it will begin conducting enhanced screening at Boston Logan International Airport of passengers arriving from China. The White House stated Tuesday it is considering a ban on all flights entering the country from China, but has not made an official decision.

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