



TOWN OF OXFORD

Town Manager

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Kerrie Singer, Board of Health Chair
FROM: Jennifer M. Callahan, Town Manager
DATE: August 21, 2024
SUBJECT: EEE Critical Risk Status

I understand the Board of Health is meeting this evening to discuss and be updated by the Director of Public Health regarding Oxford's recent designation as a Critical Risk community for Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE). Please be advised, a family member of the individual who is afflicted with the Eastern Equine Encephalitis Virus that was reported by the state Department of Public Health (DPH) has reached out to my office. We have spoken now on two occasions. The family member wanted me to inform both the Board of Health and the broader public their loved one, who is still hospitalized and courageously battling this virus, actually lives right here in Oxford.

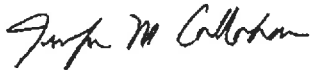
They want people to be aware this is an extremely serious disease with terrible physical and emotional consequences, regardless if the person manages to live after contracting the virus. They want residents to take the public health recommendations regarding prevention measures of contracting this virus seriously. They explained their loved one with EEE was the one person in the family who recounted through the years they never get bit by mosquitos. However, right before he became symptomatic he shared that he had been recently bitten.

The family sincerely hopes by sharing this information with residents, both in Oxford and within the other designated Critical Risk towns, they can help raise awareness. They believe people should be informed and do their utmost to protect themselves, family and friends, especially while there is an increased risk for transmission and contraction of the virus.

Additionally, my office was informed there was a horse that recently succumbed to the EEE virus in a border community in the neighboring state of Connecticut. My Office has placed calls in order to confirm this information with the Connecticut Regional Health Department. Also, the Massachusetts DPH has scheduled an Urgent Regional Meeting for town and public health officials in the critical and high risk zoned communities for tomorrow. The Town of Oxford will be participating in the meeting with other locally designated risk communities and share any new information which is learned from state officials.

Please know in light of the state EEE Critical Risk Zone recommendations, I am aware the Board may be considering the issue of continued access of town-owned outdoor recreation facilities by private leagues and organizations. Should any private recreational league or organization choose to proceed in using town properties and not follow recommendations of the DPH, Oxford Director of Public Health and/or Oxford Board of Health, they will need to complete and file an Indemnification Form with and provide proof of adequate insurance coverage to both the Recreation Commission and Town Manager's Office.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jennifer M. Callahan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Town Manager
Jennifer M. Callahan