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#2020-10

Update on the Coronavirus and Pandemic Planning

As you know, the news in recent weeks has been dominated by public health concerns over the novel coronavirus spreading to different countries after its initial occurrence in Wuhan, China. In fact, the potential affect the virus may have on the economy spurred the Federal Reserve earlier today to cut the federal funds rate by 50 basis points and Fed Chairman Jerome Powell has indicated that they are monitoring the situation closely and could take additional steps in the coming weeks to protect the economy. Over the last several weeks, we have heard from several member banks about early and proactive steps taken in planning and addressing both employee and business disruption concerns.

It is important to note this novel coronavirus has not yet been declared a global pandemic. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) is currently reporting about 10 states in the country have confirmed cases, including two in Massachusetts as of this writing. The CDC has indicated the number of cases is likely to increase in the coming weeks. We strongly encourage all banks to be proactive with their risk mitigation efforts, as this will help prepare your institution and your employees as the situation develops.

The American Bankers Association and the Independent Community Bankers of America recently created dedicated incident response pages on their websites that contain the most updated information regarding the coronavirus:

- <https://www.aba.com/coronavirus>
- <https://www.icba.org/news/Crisis-Preparedness>

Based on our conversations with various regulatory agencies, we would also encourage you to reference the existing interagency statement on pandemic planning, which was first issued in 2007 by the Federal Financial Institutions Examination Council's (FFIEC). While the agencies may update the statement or issue additional guidance based on recent developments, the existing statement provides important information regarding business continuity and pandemic planning. The guidance is available [here](#).

We will continue to monitor actions by the CDC and the Commonwealth in the coming weeks and we are in the process of planning a special webinar on the coronavirus and pandemic planning. As of today, all MBA seminars and programs will take place as planned and we will let you know if there are any changes based on the current recommendations from public health officials. Further updates will be provided through our website, bulletins and our other communication channels going forward. In the meantime, if you or your employees need any additional assistance, please contact me or [Ben Craigie](#) with questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

A blue ink handwritten signature that reads 'Dan'.

Daniel J. Forte
President



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