

Town of Sudbury

Flynn Building
278 Old Sudbury Road
Sudbury, MA 01776-1843

October 1, 2019

Governor Charlie Baker
Massachusetts State House
Office of the Governor
24 Beacon St. Room 280
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Governor Baker:

As members of the Sudbury, Massachusetts Board of Selectmen, with the support of our Board of Health Chair, we are writing to request that resources be directed towards finding solutions for the Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) virus. Sudbury recently became the location of a serious EEE infection in a young child, and the resulting shock and fear has been difficult for the community. We have responded quickly and thoroughly with existing measures to help prevent transmission of the virus but find ourselves asking “what more can be done?”

In recent weeks, due to state health agency updates and vast news reporting, we have become aware that EEE is a rare but highly dangerous virus without a broad-scale vaccine or treatment. In a recent article, Dr. Assim A. Ahmed, a physician within the Division of Infectious Disease at Boston Children’s Hospital stated, “This is one of the most dangerous viruses on the planet, and it’s right here in our backyard.” He goes on to note that during epidemics the focus is on keeping residents safe but that further effort must be made to understand factors and trends.¹

Members of our boards proactively attended the recent EEE update at MetroWest Medical Center in Framingham, attended by Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito and Senate President Karen Spilka, in addition to multiple key state agency health officials. We appreciated the update as well as the group’s willingness to listen to the questions and concerns of municipal representatives in the room. We ascertained that while much is known about EEE, there remain many questions to be further explored. These include:

- Why has this been a particularly severe year for EEE?
- Why has EEE spread to more communities in Massachusetts as well as other states in New England and elsewhere?
- What does the future trajectory for EEE appear to be?
- What additional measures can be taken to protect the public from EEE?
- Is there the possibility of a better treatment or a population-safe vaccine for EEE?
- What is the state’s plan to address EEE in 2020 and beyond?
- What can the state do to support municipalities both logistically and financially in their actions against EEE?

We would like to emphasize the impact that EEE has on communities. Sudbury residents are collectively hoping for a successful recovery for the sick child. After the diagnosis, fear and concern have weighed heavily on many individuals as we experienced a sense of “lock-down.” Restrictions were placed on schools, including stopping outdoor recess, and sports and other activities during the early evening have been curtailed. Truck and aerial spraying occurred with associated uncertainty around scheduling (due to fluctuating weather conditions). While these actions were deemed critical and necessary, it is clear that the broad effect of EEE impacts the quality of life of all.

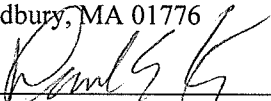
¹ Boston Children’s Hospital, “EEE: A worried parent’s questions, answered,” <http://discoveries.childrenshospital.org/eee-questions-answered/>, September 23, 2019.

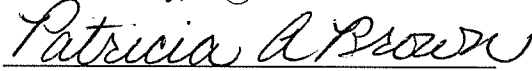
On behalf of citizens in Sudbury and beyond, we feel it is our duty to request that additional efforts be prioritized to study and combat the EEE virus. Such actions would surely require time and resources; however, given the uncertain future of EEE in Massachusetts and elsewhere, it is our belief that we must aggressively prepare for what may lie ahead.

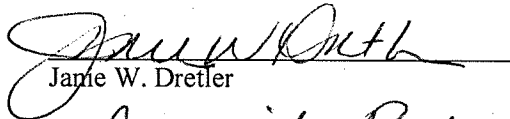
Thank you for your attention to our concerns and requests.

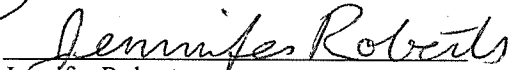
Sincerely,


Sudbury Board of Selectmen
278 Old Sudbury Road
Sudbury, MA 01776


Daniel E. Carty, Chairman

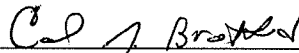

Patricia A. Brown, Vice-Chairman


Jamie W. Dretler


Jennifer Roberts


William J. Schineller

Sudbury Board of Health
275 Old Lancaster Road
Sudbury, MA 01776


Carol J. Bradford, Chair

cc: Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito
Senate President Karen Spilka
House Speaker Robert DeLeo
Commissioner of Public Health Dr. Monica Bharel
Commissioner of Agriculture John Lebeaux
Department of Public Health State Epidemiologist Dr. Catherine Brown
State Representative Carmine Gentile
State Senator Mike Barrett
State Senator James Eldridge