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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Public Health Advisory

Wellfleet Shellfish Beds Closed, Harvested Shellfish from Area Recalled *Suspected Norovirus Outbreak On Cape Cod Linked To Eating Local Shellfish.*

BOSTON, MA (October 13, 2016) – The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH), and the Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF), working in conjunction with local health and shellfish authorities, announced today that **shellfish beds in the town of Wellfleet** have been closed effective immediately due to a large outbreak of suspected norovirus illness believed to be linked to consumption of shellfish from that area.

Public health officials have received reports of approximately 75 suspect cases of norovirus over the past two days, primarily associated with eating raw shellfish at weddings and restaurants in the Outer Cape Cod area.

Officials from the DMF have notified the Town of Wellfleet and shellfish harvesters in the area about the closure. The DPH Food Protection Program is notifying businesses to recall any affected shellfish that was harvested on or after September 26, 2016.

Shellfish Growing Areas in Wellfleet Affected by Closure and Recall:

- CCB11 [Wellfleet Harbor](#)
- CCB12 [Herring River](#)
- CCB13 [Wellfleet Inner Harbor](#)
- CCB14 [Loagy Bay](#)

About Noroviruses:

Noroviruses are easily spread through food, person-to-person contact, or through contact with contaminated surfaces such as countertops or door knobs. The viruses can cause vomiting, diarrhea, and abdominal cramps. Other symptoms may include headache, fever, chills and muscle aches.

For most people noroviruses cause a very unpleasant but brief illness that usually lasts 1 to 2 days. The elderly, very young and people with weakened immune systems are at higher risk of more serious illness from noroviruses. The greatest danger is from dehydration.

Advice for the Public:

- Do not eat any shellfish from the affected areas if harvested or purchased on or after September 26, 2016. This includes oysters, hard-shell clams (“quahogs”), soft-shell clams (“steamers”), mussels and razor clams.
- If you are unsure where shellfish was harvested, contact the retailer or restaurant where the product was purchased.
- If you are experiencing symptoms of norovirus, or are caring for someone who is, practice good hand washing with warm, soapy water to prevent further spread of the illness.
- After episodes of vomiting or diarrhea, clean contaminated surfaces immediately with a bleach-based household cleaner and wash hands thoroughly afterwards. The virus is present in large numbers in both stool and vomitus.
- Contact your healthcare provider if you have more severe illness or if you think you may be dehydrated.
- [Download this factsheet](#) on noroviruses for more tips on how to prevent norovirus infection.

For more information on noroviruses, residents can contact the DPH Division of Epidemiology at (617) 983-6800. For more information on the DMF shellfish harvesting closure notice, call (508) 990-2860.

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