

# Kevin Welsh is raising awareness for Long COVID

By Kristin Rivers  
krivers@turley.com

WILBRAHAM - Kevin Welsh is raising awareness for Long COVID, letting others know they are not alone.

Welsh, 33, is a lifelong resident of Wilbraham and got COVID for the first time on October 1, 2023. He was an academic advisor and professor at Southern New Hampshire University at the time and, before the pandemic, was a teacher at Minnechaug Regional High School.

"I went the whole time without getting it. We had been keeping up with our vaccinations, we were doing everything we were supposed to be doing, but it gets ya. It gets everybody at some point, so I got it," Welsh said. "I wasn't hospitalized, but I was mostly really sick and it just never got better. Usually people with a COVID infection, a week to 10 days they're back on their feet. We got three, four, five weeks down the line and the only thing that was better was I wasn't testing positive anymore."

Welsh still had all the symptoms, including loss of taste and smell, fever, body aches, debilitating fatigue, cough and respiratory and cognitive problems. He, also, experiences vocal problems as due to the inflammation from the virus, the vocal folds in his throat "are actively closing off my airway covering my voice box."

"I've had three rounds of Botox injections into my throat to try to help and they haven't helped. I have another one set for the end of the month and that's the maximum they can do," Welsh said.

He elaborated on the debilitating fatigue he experiences.

"I now get what is called nonrestorative sleep which means I'm asleep but my body does not recharge its batteries essentially. In order to get

through the day I have to take several naps and there is almost a narcolepsy aspect to it as I will fall asleep mid-conversation, mid-bite of food or really any random time," Welsh said. "I went from someone that just needed a few hours sleep to have a great day, to someone that would sleep 24 hours a day if I could. Since I've been battling Long COVID I crave sleep like people crave food."

Other symptoms include developing blood problems he never had before, high blood pressure and becoming B12 anemic.

After many visits to his primary care, Welsh said it got to the point where they said "We can't really help you," sending him to a Long COVID clinic in Hartford, CT. There, he tried medications and nebulizers, physical therapy, speech therapy and cognitive therapy, which didn't work.

"So I started there around December 2023 and then--and now--it's still so new that there's still not, really, a ton that's known about Long COVID. It's mostly just trying to treat symptomatically and it doesn't really work," Welsh said.

He later got a phone call from the physical therapy that the clinic in was closing after "the doctor put in her resignation and didn't tell any of the patients."

After searching throughout Connecticut, New York, Rhode Island and the Boston area, Welsh went to Massachusetts General Hospital where he's been ever since, with a team of seven or eight doctors who are heads of their departments. He now goes there several times a month to try to find answers, taking part in studies and experimental trials.

"Once we got into Boston with these doctors, they were very clear from day one that if I was not fully vaccinated and boosted, then my infection would have killed me," Welsh



Photo courtesy of Kevin Welsh

Kevin Welsh, pictured right, stands with his father outside Gillette Stadium, the home of the New England Patriots, with a sign reading "I'm Fighting Long COVID. Pats Inspire Me!" that was signed by numerous players. Welsh is raising awareness for Long COVID.

said.

After getting Long COVID, Welsh shared he had to resign from his job at SNHU and could no longer do things such as going out to a restaurant.

"Life has paused. Everybody, the world, has gone back to normal. My world has not and we don't know when it will. There's a good chance these are things I deal with for the rest of my life," Welsh said.

Another difficult thing for Welsh is when he wears a mask while going to the grocery store, sharing the reactions he and others experienced.

"The looks, comments, that I get for wearing a mask in public and coughing and being winded. COVID is still so politicized that people--anyone who goes out in public with

a mask--whether it's me, my family, other people, we get criticized for it and it's terrible. It shouldn't be that way. At the end of the day, how does somebody doing something to protect themselves impact somebody else's everyday life?" Welsh said.

Welsh added he kept this to himself "for a long time," but decided to share his story to raise awareness.

"There's 30 million people in the country dealing with Long COVID. Some people have been sick since COVID began in 2020. So, it's something that needs to be talked about more, researched more, supported more," Welsh said.

Since sharing his story, people have reached out to Welsh with their own stories

and wristbands in the gray and teal LONG COVID colors that read, "Team Welsh" on one side with a ribbon and "Fight Long COVID" on the other side, were created by him and his former team at SNHU to stay connected and garner support. His doctors at MassGeneral also wear the wristbands and have had people reach out to them to learn more.

They are also sponsored by a local insurance agency owned by his father.

"It means the world to me that people want them, that people want to wear them, people want to show me the support in what I've done," Welsh said. "Everybody that's gotten one has taken a picture of themselves wearing it, so I have a collage at home full of pictures that shows me I'm not doing this alone."

This support has also expanded to the New England Patriots, who partnered with Team Welsh last summer after Welsh reached out to the team about his story and wanting to do something for his father's 70th birthday. The team hosted the family during training camp "and went above and beyond to make sure I was safe" from a personal valet to a special roped-off area so people weren't around him.

After the practice, the players came over to Welsh, who had a sign saying, "I'm fighting Long COVID. Patriots Inspire Me!" Numerous players signed it and also gave him a signed football, later spending time talking with him.

When Welsh reached out to the team again to thank them and shared about the wristbands, they responded within an hour asking for 50 to 75 wristbands for the players and staff.

"So, the entire Patriots roster, the coaching staff, the Kraft Family--the owners--all have these wristbands and a letter from me expressing my appreciation for their support

and telling them my story so everyone there knows my story," Welsh said. "In the next week or so, we're sending out enough for the roster of the Celtics."

To date, Welsh added, almost 300 of these wristbands have been distributed, with more sought as people learn his story. The prior and current presidential administrations have, also, received these wristbands.

"It has nothing to do with politics. It's about the position in the country, to have the most powerful person in the country aware of Long COVID and the fight that goes along with it. I don't care what party you're on. Just to have that support is incredible," Welsh said.

He, also, has a goal of doing a fundraising event with the wristbands and community to support Long COVID research, expressing gratitude to his family--including his parents--the community and supporters for their love and support.

One thing Welsh wishes people knew about Long COVID was this: the impact on every person is different.

"I have met many people through this that have developed things like Type 1 Diabetes from Long COVID. I've met people that had to get pacemakers because of Long COVID, but they don't have the cognitive issue, they don't have the vocal issue, they don't have the blood problem. So, it's going to present itself differently to every person that has it, which is why it's so hard for people to diagnose it," Welsh said.

He also encouraged people to keep pushing for support from their doctors or to seek a specialist to get the support and help they need.

"It's going to take you time to find the doctors, but there are doctors out that will be-

Please see COVID, page 10

## Public Notices

### TOWN OF SOUTH HADLEY PLANNING BOARD NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

The Planning Board will hold a public hearing on **Monday, April 14, 2025 at 6:30 p.m.** to consider an application for Site Plan Review filed by Mount Holyoke College c/o Karla Youngblood, 50 College Street, South Hadley, MA 01075; to develop a new energy center to include a new 6,158 SF building with associated site improvements including utility, storm-water management, and parking upgrades at 9 Woodbridge Street, Map 49 Parcel 53, pursuant to the Zoning Bylaw Article XII (Site Plan Review); and the Zoning Use and Dimensional Regulation Schedules.

The public hearing will be held in the multipurpose room of the South Hadley Senior Center, 45 Dayton Street South Hadley MA 01075.

The project location is within the Residence B Zoning District and is an existing parking lot with a small building, proposed to be demolished.

The application is on file in the Planning & Conservation Department Office (Room U6) in Town Hall and is posted at [www.southhadley.org](http://www.southhadley.org) on the Planning Department page under

'Permit Applications'- 'Site Plan Review' under section 'Woodbridge Street (9) - Mount Holyoke College Energy Center' or can be viewed at: <https://www.southhadley.org/1179/Site-Plan-Review>. Any person interested in, or wishing to be heard, should appear/join the hearing at the time and in the manner designated.

Joanna Brown, Clerk  
South Hadley Planning Board  
03/21, 03/28/2025

### TOWN OF SOUTH HADLEY PLANNING BOARD NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING Zoning Map Amendment Request

The South Hadley Planning Board will hold a public hearing on **Tuesday, April 22, 2025 at 6:30 p.m.** to consider a petition by Christine J. Walton to amend the Town of South Hadley Zoning Map regarding a 1.5949+- acres parcel from Business C to Residence A-1. The subject property is described as follows:

Beginning at the southwest corner of Parcel 133 on Assessors Map #8; Thence, running westerly a distance of approximately 740+- feet to a point on the west line of Parcel 1 on Assessors Map #8; Thence, running

southerly along the west line of said Parcel 1 to a point at which the Business C and the Residence A-1 zoning districts abut (a distance of approximately 175+- feet); Thence, running northeasterly along a line which marks the existing division between the Business C and Residence A-1 zoning districts to the point of beginning at the southwest corner of Parcel 133 as shown on Assessors Map #8. The subject property is part of a tract with frontage along the west side of Old Lyman Road.

The public hearing will be located in the multipurpose room of the South Hadley Senior Center, 45 Dayton Street South Hadley MA 01075.

The materials relative to the petition are available on the Town's website at the following link: <https://www.southhadley.org/1477/Zoning-Amendment-Requests>. Alternatively, hard copies of the documents may be viewed at South Hadley Planning and Conservation Department office.

Any person interested in, or wishing to be heard, should appear/join the hearing at the time and in the manner designated.

Joanna Brown, Clerk  
South Hadley Planning Board  
03/21, 03/28/2025

### TOWN OF SOUTH HADLEY PLANNING BOARD NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING Zoning Bylaw and Zoning Map Amendment Request

The South Hadley Planning Board will hold a public hearing on **Tuesday, April 22, 2025 at 6:30 p.m.** to consider a petition by the Center Redevelopment Corporation to amend the Town of South Hadley Zoning Bylaw in § 255-11, Article VII, Attachment 1, and Attachment 2 to create a new zoning district - "Village District" and amend the Zoning Map to change the zoning of the subject property from Business A-1, Residence A-2, and Residence A-1 to the new "Village District" zoning district.

The subject property is a 7.810+- acre parcel generally referenced as "The Village Commons", depicted on the ANR Plan endorsed by the Planning Board at their January 13, 2025 meeting (and recorded in the Hampshire County Registry of Deeds on January 24, 2025 at Page 77 in Book 257), and more particularly described with boundaries as follows:

- On the east by Hadley Street (Route 47)
- On the south by "College Street" for approximately 389

feet;

- On the south and west by parcels owned by Mount Holyoke College and depicted on Parcels 85 and 86 on Assessors Map 49 and Parcel 65 as depicted on Assessors Map 47; and,

- On the north by Parcel 64 as depicted on Assessors Map 47 and Parcels 63, 64, and 68 as depicted on Assessors Map 49.

The public hearing will be held in the multipurpose room of the South Hadley Senior Center, 45 Dayton Street South Hadley MA 01075.

The materials relative to the

petition are available on the Town's website at the following link: <https://www.southhadley.org/1477/Zoning-Amendment-Requests>

Alternatively, hard copies of the documents may be viewed at South Hadley Planning and Conservation Department office.

Any person interested in, or wishing to be heard, should appear/join the hearing at the time and in the manner designated.

Joanna Brown, Clerk  
South Hadley Planning Board  
03/21, 03/28/2025

## PUBLIC NOTICES ARE NOW ONLINE

- 1 Email all notices to [notices@turley.com](mailto:notices@turley.com)
- 2 Access archives and digital tear sheets by newspaper title.
- 3 Find a quick link to the state of Massachusetts' public notice web site to search all notices in Massachusetts newspapers.

Public notice deadlines are Friday at 3 p.m.  
visit [www.publicnotices.turley.com](http://www.publicnotices.turley.com)

# SERVICE DIRECTORY

To advertise on this page call the Town Reminder at 283-8393

### ELECTRICIAN

**GAGNON ELECTRIC**  
All Types Of Electrical Work.  
Fully Insured.  
All Work Fully Guaranteed  
Free Estimates. Lic. #14960A  
**533-8867**

TFN

### TREE SERVICES

**EDGE TREE SERVICE, INC.**  
Tree Removal, Trimming,  
Land Clearing, Stump Grinding.  
Fully Insured. Free Estimates.  
Peter Edge **532-5764**  
[www.edgetreeservice.com](http://www.edgetreeservice.com)

TFN

### TREE SERVICES

**LUCCHESI TREE SERVICE**  
AND LANDSCAPING  
Lot Clearing, Retaining Walls,  
Mowing, Pruning, Stump Grinding,  
Irrigation. Insured  
**534-1002**

TFN

