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One Presumptive Positive Case of COVID-19 Confirmed in Delaware County

Delaware County Council, joined by members of Delaware County's Department of Intercommunity Health, Delaware County's Emergency Services and the District Attorney held a press conference on March 6 to provide an update on Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19.)

On March 6, Governor Wolf confirmed two presumptive positive cases of 2019 Novel Coronavirus in Pennsylvania, one of which is in Delaware County.

The case in Delaware County is not community spread. This individual had recently traveled to an area of the United States where COVID-19 is present. The female adult is currently in her home in isolation. The Pennsylvania Health Department is conducting aggressive contact tracing to identify the people this individual may have come into contact with and alerting those people. The Pennsylvania Health Department is not releasing any further information about the adult, including her place of residence.

Delaware County Council, the Department of Intercommunity Health and the Department of Emergency Services were in contact with state officials this morning and afternoon to address the local case and discuss what the County can do to protect our residents.

Currently the best way to protect yourself is to take the same precautions you would to prevent the flu or common cold:

- Cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze with your elbow to avoid touching your face
- Wash your hands often with soap and warm/hot water for at least 20 seconds
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available
- Clean surfaces frequently, including countertops, light switches, cell phones, remotes, and other frequently touched items
- If you are feeling sick, stay home. Rest, take care of yourself and don't spread the germs.

The Pennsylvania Health Department and Center for Disease Controls and Prevention (CDC) are not recommending that the general public wear masks. Masks are not recommended to protect the general public from the virus. Masks are recommended for health care professionals and first responders who are in DIRECT contact with infected people.

The Pennsylvania Health Department and CDC are not advising that people avoid public gatherings in Delaware County, however the County is reminding residents to be prudent and use common sense in the same way you would to avoid germs and getting sick with any virus.

“We want to assure residents that we are prepared,” said Delaware County Council Vice Chair Dr. Monica Taylor. “County officials first began meeting in January to discuss how the County can prevent the spread of Coronavirus and also how to plan for a local outbreak. Members have been in daily communication with the Pennsylvania Department of Health and the CDC to monitor the situation. The health and safety of our residents is our top priority.”

The County met with members of police, fire and the EMS community on March 2 to address concerns and best ways to prevent the spread of Coronavirus. During the meeting, the County committed to providing all first responders with face masks to help protect themselves during emergency calls that may involve residents who have Coronavirus. The County, with the help of the County’s Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) was able to distribute the masks, ensuring that all of our first responders are protected. Currently, all first responders also have gloves and hand sanitizer in their emergency vehicles and EMS vehicles have additional safety equipment including protective eyewear.

The County’s facilities department is upgrading sanitation in all County buildings and taking extra precautions to ensure County buildings are as germ free as possible. Janitorial staff will be wiping down surfaces and doing additional cleaning in common areas and high traffic areas.

County officials briefed Delaware County School Superintendents in the afternoon on March 6 to provide an update and answer questions. Currently, there is not a recommendation from the CDC, State or County to close any schools. A decision to close a school(s) would be made independently by the school district.

The County has limited visitors to Fair Acres, the County’s nursing home. Non-essential visitors will not be permitted into the building. Fair Acres is advising that residents stay on campus. The decision was made to ensure that Fair Acres residents, who are often more vulnerable, are protected as much as possible.

The County does not perform the testing for 2019 Novel Coronavirus. National and academic labs are ramping up for testing. Testing will be performed based on clinical presentation and medical indication. If a resident tests positive for COVID-19, the County will follow the CDC and the Pennsylvania Department of Health’s recommendations. Updates and resources from the CDC and Pennsylvania Department of Health can be found here:

www.health.pa.gov

www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html

The County has created a website dedicated to information on the Coronavirus, including prevention, resources and a FAQ section with link to the PA Health Department and CDC. The website can be found here: www.delcopa.gov/ich/resources/coronavirus.html