

Message from KDHE Secretary Lee Norman, MD

January 28, 2020

The Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE), in conjunction with our community health partners, is investigating a Person Under Investigation for potential exposure to the 2019 novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) in a Douglas County Kansas resident. Specimens will be sent to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for testing today and KDHE expects to receive results later this week.

The patient is not severely ill and is currently in isolation at a hospital as a precaution. The patient returned to the U.S. within the last two weeks after traveling from Wuhan City, China, where an outbreak of 2019-nCoV has been underway since December 2019. The patient became symptomatic in recent days and sought healthcare Monday.

While we have not confirmed this as a case of the 2019 novel coronavirus, we believe it is important to keep the public informed and educated on this new virus. Please know that there are a number of details we are unable to share to keep this individual's privacy.

KDHE is working with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), LMH Health and the Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department to identify and contact all of those who may have come into contact with the individual so that we can begin monitoring them for fever and respiratory symptoms, should this be a confirmed case.

The 2019 novel coronavirus spreads through the air when an infected person coughs or sneezes. Symptoms are thought to appear within two to 14 days after exposure and consist of fever, cough, runny nose and difficulty breathing. Those considered at risk for contracting the virus are individuals with travel to Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China, or individuals in close contact with a person infected with the 2019 novel coronavirus.

We are also advising residents that flu and other respiratory diseases are circulating in our state and are recommending everyone get a flu shot and follow basic prevention guidelines.

Standard recommendations to prevent infection spread include regular hand washing, covering mouth and nose when coughing and sneezing, and staying home when sick.

The best ways to prevent the spread of respiratory viruses are to:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.

Protect and Improve the Health and Environment of all Kansans

- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then immediately throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

If you have recently traveled to Wuhan, China and have developed fever with respiratory symptoms within 14 days of your travel or have had contact with someone who is suspected to have 2019 Novel Coronavirus, stay home and call your healthcare provider. You may also call the KDHE Epidemiology Hotline at 1-877-427-7317 if you believe you may have been affected.

Stay well,

Lee

Media Note: A video recording by Dr. Norman will be available on www.kdheks.gov/media later this afternoon for media use. Additional information on the 2019 novel coronavirus is available on: www.kdheks.gov/coronavirus/index.htm.