



February 4, 2020

Subject: Wuhan Coronavirus (2019-nCoV)

The novel coronavirus outbreak that began in Wuhan, China in December has been declared a public health emergency by the [World Health Organization](#) (WHO) and the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC). There have been more than 17,000 cases including more than 360 deaths to date. The virus continues to spread beyond China and is now present in more than 25 countries. These numbers are expected to continue to rise. In the U.S., 11 cases have been confirmed in five states; there are no confirmed cases in Minnesota.

While this situation is concerning, the latest information still suggests that the immediate health risk to the general public remains low. Olmsted County Public Health takes any new infectious disease seriously. We, along with our medical partners, are taking precautions and carefully monitoring the situation to determine whether transmission is merely sporadic or if it will spread consistently and easily in the U.S.

Minnesota has a strong and robust public health system in place that includes hospitals, clinics and local public health. Olmsted County Public Health works with federal, state and local health agencies and our medical partners to quickly and effectively respond to any infectious disease that may be identified in our area. We continuously evaluate and modify plans designed to stop sustained transmission of communicable diseases. Based on current information, there are no recommendations to cancel events or activities due to coronavirus concerns. People who recently traveled to China who do not have symptoms do not need to stay home from school, work or other public places.

As the coronavirus situation unfolds, it is important to remember that Influenza remains a bigger concern in Minnesota – 1,436 hospitalizations and 36 deaths have occurred already this season. If you haven't gotten a flu shot yet, it is not too late. It's important that everyone follow standard prevention practices to reduce the spread of all viruses including influenza and the coronavirus:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve – not in your hands
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick
- Stay home from school, work and activities if you are ill
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces

This is a rapidly evolving situation. We will continue to provide updates and guidance to our partners and the community through targeted emails as well as social media and dedicated coronavirus webpage. Please share with others as appropriate. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us at 507-328-7500.

Sincerely,

Graham Briggs, Director  
Olmsted County Public Health