FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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First Presumptive Positive Case of 2019 Novel Coronavirus in Denton County

March 15, 2020 – Denton County Public Health (DCPH) has identified the first presumptive positive, travel-related case of 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) in Denton County. The test result is considered presumptive positive until confirmed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

The patient is a man in his thirties whose permanent residence is outside of Denton County; however, the patient is temporarily residing, and in home-isolation, within the Town of Double Oak. DCPH is identifying and contacting individuals who may have been exposed. Any individuals identified as having been exposed will be contacted directly by DCPH. No further personal information will be released to protect patient confidentiality due to HIPAA laws.

On Friday, Denton County Judge Andy Eads issued an executive order for disaster declaration for public health emergency effective immediately, strongly urging businesses, schools, places of worship and other community organizations to follow guidance limiting gatherings of 250 or more.

"Friday's disaster declaration was an important first step to prompt communities across the county to take actions to limit the potential for community spread within Denton County," Judge Eads said Sunday. "This first case reported in Denton County further demonstrates the need for all of us to follow the guidance limiting gatherings of 250 or more."

Patients diagnosed with COVID-19 have reportedly had mild to severe respiratory illness with symptoms of fever and cough or shortness of breath. Symptoms may appear in as few as 2 days or as long as 14 days after exposure.

"We strongly encourage community members to adhere to social distancing recommendations and practice routine preventive actions," stated Dr. Matt Richardson, Director of Public Health. "DCPH will continue to monitor and investigate COVID-19 within Denton County."

While this is the first presumptive positive case in Denton County, these basic preventative measures can help protect people against COVID-19 and other respiratory viruses:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.
- Stay home when you are sick, except to seek medical care.

If you have recently traveled to an area with ongoing community-spread of COVID-19 or had contact with someone who has COVID-19 and have developed fever with cough or shortness of breath, contact your healthcare provider and provide information about your symptoms. To prevent potential spread, please alert your healthcare provider before arriving to the provider's office or emergency department.

If you are generally healthy and develop mild symptoms, DCPH recommends you self-isolate at home and take care of yourself as if you would for the flu. If your symptoms worsen, seek medical attention. If you are 65 years or older or if you have underlying medical conditions and you develop symptoms of COVID-19, call your healthcare provider.

"We ask that our Denton County residents remain calm and continue to use common sense social distancing, hand washing and other best practices," Judge Eads said. "We will continue to be transparent and communicate with the public as we all work to minimize local community transmission."

Visit www.dentoncounty.gov/COVID19 for additional local information regarding COVID-19, including information for the general public, travelers, and healthcare providers.

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