March 13, 2020

Dear Faith Based Organization,

Defiance County General Health District (DCGHD) is closely monitoring coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). As of March 13, 2020 at 12:30pm, there are no confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Defiance County, however there are 5 confirmed cases in Ohio. DCGHD is communicating with state and local partners to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and sharing prevention guidance. DCGHD is reviewing emergency preparedness plans and taking measures to minimize the impact within our county.

Governor DeWine recommends that all religious institutions should consider limiting practice that could spread germs, such as shaking hands or sharing a communal cup of wine during communion. Those in faith-based communities who are high-risk should consider staying home. Faith-based communities should also consider appropriate outreach to those who may not be able to attend regular services. If you would like to consult regarding the practices your faith based organization is planning, feel free to contact DCGHD.

Preventing the spread of infectious disease:

To prevent the spread of any virus including novel coronavirus, practice these preventative measures:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds (sing happy birthday twice!).
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean “high-touch” surfaces daily. These include counters, tabletops, doorknobs, light switches, bathroom fixtures, toilets, phones, keyboards, tablets and bedside tables. Also clean any surfaces that may have blood, stool, or body fluids on them.

For more information:

- Center for Disease Control: [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)
- Ohio Department of Health: [www.coronavirus.ohio.gov](http://www.coronavirus.ohio.gov)
  Call: 1-833-427-5634
- Defiance County Health Department: [www.defiancecohealth.org](http://www.defiancecohealth.org)
  Call: 419-784-3818

Sincerely,

Jamie Gerken,
Health Commissioner, Defiance County Health Department
COVID-19 Checklist for Faith-Based and Community Organizations

Top 5 Things You Can Do to Prepare for COVID-19

Ohio Department of Health Director Amy Acton, M.D., MPH strongly recommends that all faith-based and community organizations immediately take the following actions:

☑ Implement a plan to hold remote meetings for regular gatherings, including weekly services. Review religious practices and consider ways they could occur to reduce the transmission of illness, especially practices that involve the sharing of common items or close contact with other individuals.

☑ Establish a process for temporarily postponing or canceling events, programs, and services—especially for groups at greater risk, such as older adults or people with chronic health conditions.

☑ Engage other community leaders and establish a process to help with grocery delivery, other household tasks, and reduce the feelings of isolation and loneliness of people who are staying home while sick or to avoid exposure to COVID-19.

☑ Share messages only from credible sources.

☑ Engage with stigmatized groups and speak out against negative behaviors to help counter discrimination against people who are sick. Also watch out for potential language, cultural, and disability barriers when communicating with members or congregants.

For additional information, visit coronavirus.ohio.gov.

For answers to your COVID-19 questions, call 1-833-4ASKODH (1-833-427-5634).
STAY HOME WHEN YOU ARE SICK

AVOID CONTACT WITH PEOPLE WHO ARE SICK

GET ADEQUATE SLEEP AND EAT WELL-BALANCED MEALS

WASH HANDS OFTEN WITH WATER AND SOAP (20 SECONDS OR LONGER)

DRY HANDS WITH A CLEAN TOWEL OR AIR DRY YOUR HANDS

COVER YOUR MOUTH WITH A TISSUE OR SLEEVE WHEN COUGHING OR SNEEZING

AVOID TOUCHING YOUR EYES, NOSE, OR MOUTH WITH UNWASHED HANDS OR AFTER TOUCHING SURFACES

CLEAN AND DISINFECT “HIGH-TOUCH” SURFACES OFTEN

CALL BEFORE VISITING YOUR DOCTOR

PRACTICE GOOD HYGIENE HABITS

For more information, visit: coronavirus.ohio.gov
COMMUNITY AND FAITH BASED ORGANIZATIONS

For additional information, please visit coronavirus.ohio.gov.

Community- and faith-based organizations include social service agencies, nonprofit organizations, and places of worship that are often sources of critical resources for vulnerable members of our communities. They are essential partners with public health as part of efforts to protect Ohioans from infectious diseases.

The Ohio Department of Health offers these guidelines to prepare for an outbreak of any infectious disease.

Please strive to prevent panic, provide accurate information, and quell rumors and misinformation. Seek to discourage any stigma associated with COVID-19 or any other infectious diseases by speaking out against negative behaviors, statements or exclusionary activities.

PREVENTION

- Please encourage staff, volunteers, congregants, and clients to use personal prevention protection methods at all times, whether at home or at your organization.

- Share informational fact sheets and posters:
  - Frequently Asked Questions - [Link](#)
  - Preventing Infectious Disease - [Link](#)
  - CDC Fact Sheets - [Link](#)

- Provide supplies such as soap, hand sanitizer, tissues, wipes, trash cans within your organization and within the community if possible.

- Clean high-touch surfaces and objects often.*

- Monitor absences and notify your local public health department of any spikes.

- Keep informed of recommendations of public health officials and inform your staff, volunteers, congregants, and clients.

*CLEAN ALL “HIGH TOUCH” SURFACES EVERY DAY

High touch surfaces include counters, tabletops, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures, toilets, phones, keyboards, tablets, and bedside tables. Also, clean any surfaces that may have blood, stool, or body fluids on them. Use a household cleaning spray or wipe according to the label instructions. Labels contain instructions for safe and effective use of the cleaning product including precautions you should take when applying the product, such as wearing gloves and making sure you have good ventilation during use of the product.
PLANNING

- Update or create an emergency operations plan with a specific coordinator or team.

- Consider all staffing, systems, programs, and services and consider various possible scenarios.

- Plan for worker absences by training other in critical roles. Plan for ways to limit non-essential operations/services if needed. Consider alterations of work hours. Plan to provide information that explains the reason.

- Partner with other organizations and agencies in the community, including the local health department and other local agencies, businesses, and other community and faith-based groups.

- Develop flexible sick-leave policies, allowing workers to stay home if they or someone in their home is sick.

- Develop a plan to increase distance between people working or congregating to at least 3 feet whenever possible.

- Develop a plan to separate people exhibiting respiratory symptoms form others and help them get home or to medical care as soon as possible.

- Plan for the possible cancelling of nonessential travel. Consider telework options, staggered schedules, web-based seminars and postponing meetings or holding them remotely.

- Create or update emergency communication plans.

- Plan for ways to reach people with language, cultural or disability barriers. Translate pertinent documents into languages in your community.

- Create a necessities bank to collect prevention and care items for people who may need them.

- Plan for ways to continue essential services using methods that eliminate or reduce congregating.

- Plan for modifying or canceling large community events, programs, and non-essential services if necessary.
Q: What is coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)?

A: COVID-19, or coronavirus disease 2019, is an upper respiratory tract disease caused by one of the seven coronaviruses known to infect humans. It was first identified in humans in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China, in December 2019. The virus that causes COVID-19 is called SARS-CoV-2.

Q: Who is at risk?

A: People who recently traveled to China, South Korea, Japan, Iran, or Italy, and people who care for patients with COVID-19 are at highest risk.

Q: What are the symptoms?

A: Symptoms, which generally appear two to 14 days after exposure, include fever, cough, and difficulty breathing. Most people who become sick do not require hospitalization, but older adults, people with chronic health conditions, and people with compromised immune systems are more likely to require more advanced care.

Q: How does it spread?

A: Coronaviruses are generally thought to be spread most often by respiratory droplets. The virus that causes coronavirus disease 2019 is spreading from person-to-person and someone who is actively sick with the disease can spread the illness to others. That is why CDC recommends that these patients be isolated either in the hospital or at home until they are better and no longer pose a risk of infecting others.

Q: What can I do to prevent it?

A: There are no vaccines to prevent COVID-19. Implement the personal prevention protection methods used to prevent flu and other infectious diseases:

- Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds; dry hands with a clean towel or air dry hands.
- Use alcohol-based hand sanitizer when soap and water are unavailable.
- Cover your mouth with a tissue or sleeve when sneezing or coughing.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Avoid contact with people who are sick.

Also, clean high-touch areas – counters, tables, doorknobs, light switches, bathroom fixtures, toilets, phones, keyboards, tablets, nightstands – every day using household cleaning spray or wipes according to label directions.
Q: Where is it spreading?

A: While the COVID-19 outbreak began in China, it is now spreading worldwide, threatening to cause a pandemic. Sustained, ongoing person-to-person spread in the community is occurring in some international locations. In the U.S., several instances of infection with the virus that causes COVID-19 have occurred in people with no travel history and no known source of exposure in several states. This has raised the level of concern about the immediate threat of COVID-19 for certain communities.

Q: Should I wear a face mask?

A: The use of face masks by people who are not sick is not recommended to protect against respiratory diseases. Face masks should be used by people who show symptoms of COVID-19 to help prevent spread of the disease and by health care workers and others taking care of someone in a close setting.

Q: Is it still safe to travel internationally?

A: The U.S. Department of State is advising against travel to China and Iran due to COVID-19 outbreaks and advising that travelers reconsider plans to go to South Korea and Italy. Increased caution is advised in traveling to Japan (Level 2 advisory).

Q: What should I do if I had contact with someone diagnosed with COVID-19?

A: Detailed information for people who have had close contact with a person confirmed to have, or being evaluated for, COVID-19 are available from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention here.

Q: Should I get tested for COVID-19?

A: Call a health care professional if you develop a fever or symptoms of respiratory illness -- such as cough or shortness of breath -- within 14 days of travel from China, South Korea, Japan, Iran, or Italy, or within 14 days of close contact with a COVID-19 patient. Testing is also advised for people who have severe, acute lower respiratory illness requiring hospitalization, and no other diagnosis to explain the symptoms.

Q: Will warm weather stop the outbreak of COVID-19?

A: It is not yet known whether weather and temperature impact the spread of COVID-19. Some other viruses, like the common cold and flu, spread more during cold weather months, but that does not mean it is impossible to become sick with these viruses during other months. At this time, it is not known whether the spread of COVID-19 will decrease when weather becomes warmer.

Developed March 2, 2020, with information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Additional FAQs can be found at the CDC website here.
COVID-19

Please continue to protect yourself from all infectious diseases by using these precautions.

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Additional information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/
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.

Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.

Stay home when you are sick, except to get medical care.

Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

For more information: www.odh.ohio.gov