Williams County Health District

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Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Williams County Health District

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 02, 2020

Williams County Health Department Reports First Case of COVID-19 in Williams County

Montpelier, OH – The Williams County Health Department (WCHD) is reporting the first lab-confirmed case of coronavirus (COVID-19) for a Williams County resident. WCHD along with hospitals, healthcare providers, and community partners have been actively preparing to respond to possible cases of COVID-19 in our community.

WCHD is working to identify any close contacts of this resident who would require testing or monitoring for symptoms of COVID-19. No personal information about the Williams County case will be provided in order to protect personal privacy; however, the Williams County Health Department will be monitoring the patient throughout the isolation period. "We are working closely with the Ohio Department of Health, following protocols and guidance in place, to identify close contacts of this individual. These individuals will be instructed to self-quarantine and will be monitored for 14 days," said James D. Watkins Williams County Health Commissioner. "Our focus right now is to support the care of this individual and protect the health of our residents. The news of a COVID-19 case in our county is not a surprise as we know there is community spread in Ohio. We have community interventions in place that are designed to slow transmission in our community while lessening the impact. Our investigation is on-going. Our main goal is to isolate those who are ill, identify close contacts and monitor for illness."

According to public health experts at the Ohio Department of Health, many Ohioans are infected unknowingly with COVID-19, indicating community spread of COVID-19. This means that as lab-confirmed cases continue to increase in Williams County, community members must be aware that there are more cases than reported. Dr. Amy Acton, Director of the Ohio Department of Health, has emphasized that due to limited or lack of testing, the cases reported publicly are only the tip of the iceberg.

Slowing the rate of the infection is critical to save lives. State-wide measures have taken to contain the COVID-19 virus. This is all part of an effort to do what epidemiologists call "flattening the curve" of the pandemic. The steps the community and individuals take now will delay the sharp spike in cases that could occur if the community does not take preventative measures. To best protect the vulnerable, minimize the spread of COVID-19, and delay the surge of cases seeking treatment in healthcare settings, action must be taken now.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

- **Social or physical distancing** (6 or more feet away from others) slows the spread and limits people vulnerable to complications from COVID-19 from coming in contact with people who are unaware they are infected.
- **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 with at least 60% alcohol when soap and water are unavailable. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- **Clean "high-touch" surfaces daily**. These include counters, tabletops, doorknobs, light switches, remote controls, bathroom fixtures, toilets, phones, keyboards, desks, and tablets. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products (e.g., concentration, application method and contact time, etc.).

- **Use cough etiquette.** Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- **Stay home when you are sick**. Keep your distance, stay in your bedroom and use a bathroom separate from the one used by other members of your household, if possible.

This is a rapidly evolving situation. To ensure you are obtaining accurate information about COVID-19, please visit the Ohio Department of Health's website (https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/) for updates. If you have questions regarding Coronavirus/COVID-19 please call 1-833-4-ASK-ODH (1-833-427-5634).

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