

DHSS Press Release

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Dr. Kara Odom Walker, Secretary
Jill Fredel, Director of Communications
Cell 302-357-7498
Email: DPHMedia@delaware.gov

DPH ANNOUNCES ADDITIONAL POSITIVE CASES OF CORONAVIRUS

DOVER (March 17, 2020) – The Delaware Division of Public Health (DPH) is announcing eight additional positive cases of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) bringing the statewide total to 16. Seven of the eight individuals are New Castle County residents, and **one is the first reported case in Sussex County**. Four of these individuals are males, and four are females. All but one is self-isolating at home; one in New Castle County is hospitalized. Six of the seven New Castle County residents participated in the ChristianaCare Health System drive through testing event. **The Sussex County resident had a travel-related exposure.** The source of the exposure of the remaining individuals is under investigation. DPH will not be disclosing additional information about the individuals. DPH does not have the results for all of the patients who attended drive-through event; the hospital system that performed the testing will report results to the patients, and all positive results to DPH.

DPH's guidance for individuals who are well, are to limit social contacts while practicing social distancing from others (keeping six feet apart), and finding alternative ways to greet people that don't involve shaking hands, as well as practicing good hand and cough hygiene. However, individuals who are at elevated risk, which includes persons age 60 and older and those with chronic underlying health conditions, are urged to remain at home to limit their exposure to germs.

For individuals who are sick, particularly with fever, cough and shortness of breath, stay home, and contact your primary care provider for guidance regarding symptoms and next steps.

Testing for coronavirus disease is not recommended for individuals who do not have any symptoms of illness. For individuals who have symptoms of illness (fever and cough, or shortness of breath), specimens will be collected by medical providers and run at either a commercial laboratory or the Public Health Lab. Medical providers

must collect specimens for testing; specimens are not collected at the DPH Lab or at commercial labs. Medical providers should evaluate patients and rule out other causes of illness first before recommending testing for COVID-19.

While testing for the disease at the Public Health Lab requires DPH approval, providers do not need DPH approval to submit test samples to commercial labs. With commercial lab testing now available, Delaware has enough capacity to accommodate its current testing needs. Providers only need to collect nasal swabs as they would for flu to submit samples for testing.

There is no specific antiviral treatment recommended for COVID-19 infection at this time. While in some cases illnesses can be severe and require hospitalization, many individuals infected with COVID-19 recover by resting, drinking plenty of liquids and taking pain, and fever-reducing medications.

DPH reminds Delawareans to use everyday measures to prevent the spread of all infections, which would also slow the spread of COVID-19:

- Cough or sneeze into your elbow, not your hand. If you use a tissue, dispose of it right away.
- Wash your hands frequently and thoroughly, including the backs of your hands and under your nails, for 20 seconds. Or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Do not touch your face, eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Clean commonly used surfaces such as computers, desktops, countertops cabinets, handles and more with disinfectant.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home when you are sick, except to get medical care.
- If you are healthy, the CDC does not recommend buying or using face masks. You should only wear a mask if a health care provider tells you do so.

Delawareans with general questions about COVID-19 or their exposure risk can call the Division of Public Health's Coronavirus Call Center at 1-866-408-1899, or 711 for individuals who are hearing impaired, from 8:30 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Friday, and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, or email DPHCall@delaware.gov. The DPH Call Center does not have test results. Individuals awaiting test results should wait to hear back from their medical provider.

DPH will continue to update the public as more information becomes available. For the latest on Delaware's response, go to de.gov/coronavirus.

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