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Update – 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) February 26, 2020

The Nevada County Public Health Department (NCPHD) has received inquiries regarding the novel coronavirus (the illness caused by the virus is COVID-19) and recommendations made yesterday by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to prepare for a potential pandemic. This announcement has created concern for many, so to ensure that your inquiries are addressed, NCPHD has created a new "[News and Updates](#)" tab on our website. Also, as this remains an emerging and rapidly evolving situation, we highly recommend that that you check these reliable sources for the latest accurate information on COVID-19 links to sites that offer regular and reliable updates in English and Spanish: [CDC](#), [World Health Organization](#) (WHO), and [California Department of Public Health](#) (CDPH).

As of February 26, 2020, there are no confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Nevada County, and there is still *no known community transmission of the virus in the US*. Infected persons in the US were either exposed while in China or have been very close contacts (such as in the same household) of ill, laboratory-confirmed cases. So, while the virus is a serious public health concern, the risk to most people in the U.S. remains low, and seasonal flu currently is a more immediate threat to individual and community health.

The hallmarks of public health have always been prevent, promote and protect, but we also spend quite a bit of time and resources on preparing. As the virus spread globally, we started planning for the possibility of local, sustained community transmission. NCPHD has already sent out several health care provider alerts so that local providers know what to look for and how to handle a suspect case. We have also begun outreach to health care facilities, schools and others to discuss what their planning efforts may include, and share with them recommended non-pharmaceutical interventions, which are actions that individuals and communities can take to help slow the spread of illnesses.

Accurate information can help reduce fears and we can all take steps to collectively protect our community. NCPHD recommends the following to protect against all respiratory illnesses:

- Stay home when you are sick.
- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after using the restroom, before eating, and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then toss the tissue in the trash.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth especially with unwashed hands.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.
- Get a flu vaccine to prevent influenza if you have not already done so this flu season.
- Follow CDC travel advisories.
- *If you have travelled to China within the past 14 days* or have been in close contact with an ill person who has laboratory-confirmed novel coronavirus (this will be rare in the US), please follow quarantine guidance and contact your provider and NCPHD if you develop symptoms so you can be safely evaluated without exposing others.

Also, please do not hoard face masks or N95 respirators. Facemasks are most effective to limit spread when used by people who are sick. The greatest need for N95 respirators is for the appropriate use by health care workers.

Again, there is no known community spread of novel coronavirus in the United States, so the risk to the general public remains low. The NCPHD will continue to have close communication with state and federal health officials and with our local health care providers as new information and guidance becomes available.

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