

News Release: Broadwater County Public Health Department 03-06-2020

Broadwater County Prepares for Spread of Coronavirus, COVID-19

In the state of Montana 28 returning travelers from China and other countries have been monitored since February 1st and 19 have successfully completed the 14-day monitoring period. Nine individuals are currently being monitored. Eight have been tested and eight have been negative. One of the individuals who is being monitored is in Broadwater County.

Cases of COVID-19 have ranged from people with little to no symptoms to severe illness and death. The CDC expects cases to continue to be confirmed, and the local Public Health Department wants families and individuals to prepare to act to help prevent the spread of the virus.

Please call ahead to a healthcare professional if you develop a fever and symptoms of respiratory illness, such as cough or difficulty breathing, and have been in close contact with a person known to have COVID-19 or if you live in or have recently traveled to an area with ongoing spread. Tell your healthcare professional about your recent travel or contact. Your healthcare professional will work with your local and state's public health departments and CDC to determine if you need to be tested for COVID-19.

Governor Steve Bullock, along with state public health and emergency response officials, announced the activation of the Governor's Coronavirus Task Force on 03-03-2020.

"As Governor Bullock has directed, we have to ensure our state is prepared for the potential affects coronavirus may have in our state," Major General Quinn said. **"We are working to ensure agencies within state government are ready and able to support this public health response."**

"Our local county public health partners are truly on the front lines of disease surveillance, monitoring individuals potentially exposed to the virus, and keeping their communities informed," DPHHS Director Sheila Hogan said. **"This is a rapidly evolving situation and CDC is constantly reviewing and updating its guidance as needed. We encourage Montanans to stay informed by accessing reputable information sources such as the CDC and DPHHS websites."**

Governor Bullock emphasized that the same preventive measures that are recommended during cold and flu season will also help to protect against coronavirus, including:

- Wash your hands thoroughly and often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Cover your cough/sneeze with a tissue (or your elbow).
- Stay away from work, school, or other people if you become sick.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

These are everyday habits which can help prevent the spread of several viruses. Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure, including fever, cough, and shortness of breath. Generally, elderly people and those with other existing health conditions are likely to be more at risk of developing severe symptoms from respiratory illnesses.

Broadwater County Public Health is prepared to answer questions related to the COVID-19. If you believe you have been exposed to the virus please call Broadwater County Public Health at 266-5209. For up to date information you can access DPHHS website at www.dphhs.mt.gov or the CDC's website: www.cdc.gov/COVID19