



March 5, 2020

To Our Partners in Health:

We recognize that there is a lot of information, including mis-information, circulating about the Novel Coronavirus, now known as COVID-19. We would like to share a situational update and some recommendations with the understanding this is a rapidly evolving situation and information changes frequently.

WHAT IS KNOWN

- The virus causing coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a new coronavirus that has not been previously identified and causes a respiratory illness.
- Most people diagnosed with COVID-19 experience mild symptoms.
- Like influenza, the people who are most likely to have severe symptoms and complications from COVID-19 are older individuals (>60 years old) and those with other medical conditions like heart and lung disease or diabetes.
- There is no vaccine or treatment currently available for COVID-19.

HOW THE VIRUS SPREADS

- COVID-19 is believed to spread primarily the same way the common cold or flu spreads—through respiratory droplets that are produced when someone coughs or sneezes. It is unknown if the virus spreads on infected surfaces, but this is not believed to be the main way it spreads.
- People who are most at risk of becoming infected with COVID-19 are those who have been in close contact (within about 6 feet) with someone who has the disease.
- People are thought to be most contagious when they are most symptomatic (the sickest).

WHAT CAN SCHOOLS AND BUSINESSES DO NOW, PRIOR TO COMMUNITY SPREAD

- Implement your annual seasonal influenza plan.
 - Students and staff who are ill, especially with acute respiratory symptoms (not allergies or chronic conditions), should stay home.
 - Review sick policies for staff; ensure staff can stay home when ill.
- Ensure prescribed cleaning is happening (routine disinfectants are appropriate).
 - Enhance cleaning of high touch surfaces like doorknobs, toilet handles, and sink handles.
 - Ensure that hand sanitizer, soap/paper towels and tissues are widely available.
 - Encourage people to cover their coughs/sneezes with a tissue or their elbow.

- Plan for when community spread occurs (non-pharmaceutical interventions or NPIs)
 - Explore telecommuting and other work-at-home options.
 - Identify at-home learning opportunities during student absences or school closures.
 - Ensure parents/guardians have a plan to designate a caregiver for a sick child(ren) if parents/guardians can't stay home.
 - Look for opportunities to address food insecurity for families who rely on schools for breakfast and/or lunch.
 - Identify how the school will communicate updates to parents/guardians.
 - For more information about the use of NPIs to respond to pandemics, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/nonpharmaceutical-interventions/>.

LIMITING OR CLOSING SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY EVENTS FOR COVID-19

- Bear River Health Department is working closely with our state and local public health partners to develop guidelines for limiting community events and school closure recommendations once COVID-19 begins to circulate in our community. It has been determined that every effort to avoid closures will be made and we will take into account the severity of disease, benefits to public health, impact on student learning, families, childcare, school staff and the economy.
- Because most people with COVID-19 have mild disease, the likelihood that Bear River Health Department will recommend closing schools or limiting public activities is extremely remote, but not zero.
- If such cancelations occur, it will be with the goal of slowing the spread of the disease.

UTAH'S CORONAVIRUS INFORMATION LINE

Utah's Public Health System has initiated a Coronavirus Information Line, **1-800-456-7707**, made available to us through the Utah Poison Control Center. It is staffed with healthcare professionals whose focus is to answer questions, give status updates and local advisories related to Coronavirus.

Thank you for your partnership. We welcome your questions or comments and hope you feel free to contact us at 435-792-6500 or check online at www.brhd.org for local updates or www.cdc.gov for national guidelines.

Sincerely



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