



LAWRENCE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.
Lawrence County Health Department

Georgia Dillon, APRN, CNP
Health Commissioner

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March 12, 2020

As of yesterday, the World Health Organization changed COVID-19 from an outbreak to a pandemic. Internationally, there are currently 113 countries affected with a total of 118,322 confirmed cases. There have been 4292 deaths. In the United States, 36 states (including Washington DC) are reporting a total of 938 cases with 29 deaths. The fourth confirmed case in Ohio was announced yesterday, and Ohio has reported no deaths as a result of COVID-19. As of now, there are no confirmed cases in Lawrence County.

Pandemics have the potential to disrupt our lives, but we at Lawrence County Health Department are working non-stop with our state and local partners to minimize the effects of COVID-19 on our county. We have met with our EMA director, county commissioners, Ironton city mayor and city government, representatives from law enforcement, EMS, local hospitals, and school superintendents, and we have meetings scheduled with others in the upcoming days. We are also reaching out to the faith-based community. We will fully investigate any and all potential cases.

As new information about this disease emerges, guidance changes, and we understand this can be very confusing and seem chaotic at times. The most important things we can do are to remain calm, become educated, and most of all prepare and do what we can do to protect ourselves and our families. Remember that it's still flu season, and flu is still widespread in every state but two. If you haven't gotten a flu shot, there is still time to do that. Because COVID-19 is NOT a flu, a flu shot won't help prevent it; however, it will help prevent flu, which will help keep you out of ER or urgent care, which will help protect you from other illnesses and keeps from overwhelming health care facilities.

Wash your hands often with soap and water. If soap and water aren't available, an alcohol-based hand sanitizer will work. Clean frequently touched surfaces (door knobs, light switches, counters, bathroom fixtures) at least daily with an EPA-approved cleaner or with 1/3 cup bleach to a gallon of water. Regardless of the product, read directions to make sure the product is safe you and appropriate for the area you're cleaning. Avoid contact with anyone who is sick. If you're sick, please stay home. Cough or sneeze into your sleeve or into a tissue and throw the tissue away. Try to avoid crowds. Social distancing is effective in stopping the spread of illness. If you're sick enough to go to your doctor or ER, call ahead and let them know what your symptoms are, any travel you may have had, and whether or not you've had contact with a person with a confirmed case of COVID-19. Do what you can to keep yourself and your family healthy. Think about what you might need to have on hand in the event you are too ill to go to the store or if stores are closed (or are out of essentials). Do you have enough food, water, medicine, pet food, hygiene products, and toilet paper to last 14 days?

Read, listen, and learn everything you can from the health experts about this illness to keep you and your family safe. A great resource is coronavirus.ohio.gov. This website may answer any questions you have. The Ohio Department of Health also has a call center, staffed with public health officials including licensed nurses and infectious disease experts. The call center will be open 7 days a week from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. and can be reached at 1-833-4-ASK-ODH (1-833-427-5634).

Lawrence County Board of Health:
Randy Lambert, President ● Curtis Anderson, Vice President
Lois Herrell ● Brenda Shipley ● Ryan Brislin, MD

Dr. Amy Acton, Director at ODH, is working closely with Governor DeWine to protect Ohio and provide guidance to our local health departments and our communities. Information from a news release yesterday includes the following recommendations:

- Cancel or postpone large, indoor gatherings due to the potential for COVID-19 exposure
- *Higher Education:* all universities and colleges in Ohio should screen students returning from international travel or cruises, including, but not limited to, students returning from spring break travel. Any university sponsored international travel, non-essential travel, and large gatherings should be canceled or postponed. Higher education institutions should also consider offering online/remote learning
- *K-12 Schools:* Governor DeWine is not currently recommending the closure of elementary, middle, and high schools; however, school administrators should begin planning for that possibility. Parents should also begin planning for the potential that they may need to stay home with their children or find alternative child care solutions.
- *Athletics:* Governor DeWine has recommended that all indoor high school, college, and professional sports competitions be held without spectators. He asks that events take place only with athletes, parents, sporting officials, and media. Right now, outdoor sporting events can continue as planned.
- *General Large Gatherings:* Generally, Governor DeWine recommends that organizers of any events involving a large gathering of individuals in close proximity be canceled or postponed, such as parades.
- *Religious Institutions:* Governor DeWine recommends that all religious institutions consider limiting practices that could spread germs, such as shaking hands or sharing a communal cup of wine during communion. Those in faith-based communities who are high-risk should consider staying home. Faith-based communities should also consider appropriate outreach to those who may not be able to attend regular services.
- *Nursing Homes:* Because nursing homes house Ohio's most high-risk residents, we are recommending that nursing homes screen all visitors, including volunteers and vendors, for symptoms of contagious illnesses.
- *Adult and Juvenile Correctional Facilities:* Governor DeWine has ordered that visitations at Ohio's adult and juvenile corrections facilities be suspended. Contractors who are not critical to the workings of the facility will not be granted entrance. Those who are permitted into these facilities will be screened for symptoms of illness and must submit to a temperature reading.

As I mentioned above, we are very committed to keeping our community safe. Please don't hesitate to reach out to us if you have concerns.

Sincerely,

Georgia Dillon, APRN, CNP
Health Commissioner

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