Central Michigan
District Health Department
Promoting Healthy Families, Healthy Communities

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PRESS RELEASE FOR LOCAL MEDIA

To: Local News Media

From: Central Michigan District Health Department

RE: Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV)

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Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV)

Coronaviruses are a family of viruses that can infect people and animals. They are a common cause of mild respiratory illness, or "the common cold", in people. Once in a while, coronaviruses from people and animals mix together, creating a new strain. These new strains usually cause worse illness in people.

An example of one of these new strains is the 2019 novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV). Cases started in Wuhan, China in December 2019 and now, as of January 27, 2020, number over 2,800 in 15 countries, with 81 deaths. This is a fatality rate of approximately 3%. There have been 5 cases in the United States but no spread of the illness from these cases.

We have seen new strains of coronaviruses before. In 2002-2003, severe acute respiratory disease coronavirus (SARS-CoV) caused 8,437 cases and 813 deaths, a fatality rate of approximately 10%. Then, in 2012, Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV) was identified as a cause of severe illness. It caused over 2,400 cases globally and had a fatality rate of around 35%.

Coronaviruses, including 2019-nCoV, are spread by droplets created by coughing or sneezing. This is the same way influenza (flu) is spread. While 2019-nCoV is a serious public health situation, only those in direct contact to someone who is ill are at risk. It is recommended that travelers avoid all nonessential travel to Hubei Province, China. It is also recommended that people traveling to other parts of China avoid contact with people who are sick and practice good hand hygiene.

If you have been in China within the last 2 weeks and develop symptoms of 2019-nCoV, which include fever, cough, or shortness of breath, call your healthcare provider. Symptoms should appear within 2 to 14 days after being exposed.

There is currently no vaccine to prevent 2019-nCoV infection. The best way to prevent infection is to avoid exposure to this virus. But everyday actions can help prevent the spread of respiratory viruses, including:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home when you are sick.

For more information, please visit https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html or www.michigan.gov/coronavirus.

This article has been brought to you by Central Michigan District Health Department, which serves the counties of Arenac, Clare, Gladwin, Isabella, Osceola and Roscommon. Visit our website at www.cmdhd.org, LIKE Central Michigan District Health Department on Facebook and follow us on Twitter @CMiDHD.

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