Marion County Health Department

PSA - March 11, 2020

Marion County Health Department (MCHD) has been working with CDC, IDPH, hospitals, labs, healthcare providers, schools and Emergency Management for several weeks to prepare for possible COVID-19 patients (the disease caused by novel coronavirus). Beyond the current COVID-19 concerns, MCHD has been formally working with healthcare providers to plan for disease outbreaks for over twenty-five years. The work of public health and the healthcare system to prevent and control infectious disease is a non-stop effort. Our response effort for diseases like COVID-19 builds upon this daily, behind the scenes work.

MCHD continues to stress to the public the actions they should be taking now to be prepared for the potential of COVID19, seasonal flu and other respiratory diseases as follows:

<u>Wash hands</u> frequently with soap and warm water. Use a hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol content whenever handwashing is unavailable;

<u>Cover your coughs and sneezes</u>, by placing your face into your elbow or a tissue. Dispose of the tissue directly into the trash;

<u>Stay home when you are ill.</u> Do not risk spreading your respiratory issues to friends, co-workers or classmates. If you must go out, such as to a medical appointment, practice social distancing – meaning try to isolate yourself as much as possible and avoid close contact with others.

<u>Practicing the simple actions above</u> can significantly reduce the transmission of all respiratory diseases.

The risk of contracting COVID-19 from the novel coronavirus is still considered low in our area. Those that have traveled to other countries significantly impacted by COVID-19, and close contacts of those individuals, are at higher risk. Currently, there are no confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Marion County.

<u>If you have symptoms of COVID-19, such as fever, coughing and breathing difficulties, please be aware these are also common symptoms of most respiratory diseases. To minimize spread of disease, call your healthcare provider to discuss possible diagnoses prior to arrival.</u>

In addition, the Illinois Department of Public Health has a hotline that residents can call with COVID-19 questions. The phone number is 1-800-889-3931, or you can email DPH.SICK@ILLINOIS.GOV.
Stay informed on COVID-19 using trusted sources of information, including the CDC, Illinois Department of Public Health, Marion County Health Department, and healthcare providers.

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