TO: Community, School, Healthcare and Governmental Leaders of VBCDHD Region

FROM: Van Buren Cass District Health Department

DATE: March 2, 2020

RE: COVID-19 (Novel Coronavirus)

As you know, the coronavirus outbreak is a fluid, rapidly evolving situation. We will provide resources and updated information as it becomes available.

WHAT IS KNOWN SO FAR:

- As of March 2, 2020 there have been no confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the State of Michigan.
- There has been only one Person in Van Buren Cass District that is receiving active monitoring for 14 days, which means they have traveled from a high risk country, are asymptomatic, but health department has daily contact with this individual to assess for signs and symptoms related to COVID-19.
- The virus can spread from person to person. At this time, there is no vaccine for protection, and no approved medications to treat it.
- Older adults and those with chronic medical conditions may be at increased risk for disease.
- 80% of cases will be mild, with a mortality rate of approximately 2%.
- Symptoms may include fever, cough, difficulty breathing, chest tightness and pneumonia.
- Testing for COVID-19 is now available at our state lab with turnaround time as short as 24 hours.

Van Buren Cass District Health Department RESPONSE: WHAT WE ARE DOING?

- Created an internal Incident Management Team.
- We are participating in the recently activated State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC), to coordinate with state, local and federal agencies to help prevent the spread of Novel Coronavirus.
- Partnering with state and federal agencies for communication and guidance on COVID-19 to the public and healthcare professionals.
- Coordinate with expert healthcare professionals on designating patients as a person under investigation (PUI) for COVID-19, based on risk exposure and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance.
- Coordinate with healthcare systems on determining appropriate setting for evaluation and monitoring of PUI.
- Maintain communication with local medical providers and key community leaders to provide up to date information.
WHAT SHOULD YOU BE DOING?

• Educate yourself and others by visiting the following website: cdc.gov/coronavirus, Michigan.gov/coronavirus or vbcassdhd.org/coronavirus which has links to the State and Federal websites.

  Things to prevent or mitigate the illness are:
  ✓ Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
  ✓ If you are sick, stay home and avoid contact with others.
  ✓ Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
  ✓ Cover your cough or sneeze.
  ✓ Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.
  ✓ Regularly wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
  ✓ If soap and water is not available, use hand sanitizer.

• Facemask use within the community:
  - CDC does not recommend that people who are well wear a facemask to protect themselves from respiratory illnesses, including COVID-19. You should only wear a mask if a healthcare professional recommends it.
  - A facemask should be used by people who have COVID-19 and are showing symptoms. This is to protect others from the risk of getting infected.
  - The use of facemasks is also crucial for healthcare workers and other people who are taking care of someone infected with COVID-19 in close settings (at home or in a health care facility).

• International travel:
  - CDC currently has the following countries under a Travel Alert Level 3 which recommends that travelers avoid all nonessential travel to People’s Republic of China (this does not include Hong Kong, Macau or island of Taiwan). Also non-essential travel to South Korea, Italy and Iran. There are several other countries with travel precautions. Please consider utilizing the CDC’s Traveler’s Health website when contemplating international travel as this is an evolving situation.
We are regularly receiving ongoing guidance and information from Michigan Department of Health & Human Services (MDHHS) and the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC). We are committed to providing our community, school, healthcare and governmental leaders with updated information so informed decisions can be made. Van Buren Cass District Health Department is a resource for all questions and concerns related to this or any other important public health matter.

Sincerely,

Jeffery Elliott,  Larry E. Wile, MD, MPH
Health Officer/Administrator  Medical Director

RESOURCES AND CONTACT INFORMATION:

Van Buren Cass District Health Department phone (269) 621-3143; or visit our website: https://vbcassdhd.org

After Hours Contact for Public Health Emergency in Van Buren and Cass County:

- Van Buren County: Contact Van Buren County Sheriff Dispatch at 269-657-3101.
- Cass County: Call 911. The appropriate Health Department staff will be contacted.

