

February 28, 2020

For immediate release

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COVID-19 (Coronavirus) Planning & Preparation

With the daily evolution of the COVID-19 virus, now is the time to make plans and prepare for the possibility of local cases. There are no cases in the health district at this time. Preparation now can aid in delaying the spread of the virus and can reduce the impact on your everyday life.

“SWNPHD is receiving frequent updates as they come in from the state and Center for Disease Control (CDC),” states Kathie Skeen, Emergency Planning Coordinator for Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD). “Even though the possibility is there, the risk factor for COVID-19 is extremely low in southwest Nebraska.”

Families and businesses can prepare now instead of being caught by surprise. Just as you prepare for natural disasters, you can prepare for pandemic diseases. For businesses, this includes planning for the loss of as much as 25% of your workforce, whether they are sick or caring for someone else who is sick. Consider how you will keep daily operations going. For families, ask what you would do, if schools and/or daycares were to close.

Planning and preparation tips:

- Stay up to date on information from public health officials.
- Create work-from-home plans if that is an option.
- Make backup arrangements if schools and/or daycares were to close.
- Discuss with your daycare providers what to expect if the daycare is closed for a week or longer.
- Increase cleaning supplies including bleach, laundry detergent, disinfecting wipes, hand and dish soap.
- Have over-the-counter medication on hand (i.e. fever reducing medicine, cold medicine, etc). Most people only experience mild symptoms that are relieved with rest, fluids and these medications.
- Make a plan for if self-isolation becomes necessary and you need to stay at home for the recommended 14-day period.

If you live in Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Hayes, Hitchcock, Keith, Perkins or Red Willow counties and have traveled within the last 14 days to one of the countries where COVID-19 is circulating, please

report to Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department at 308-345-4223. Currently these countries are China, Iran, Italy, Japan, South Korea, Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand, and Vietnam. You can also self-report to the Nebraska Public Health Online System at <https://dhhs.ne.gov/pages/Coronavirus.aspx>.

Skeen recommends the websites for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) at www.cdc.gov and University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC) www.unmc.edu for the most up-to-date information.

For more information, contact SWNPHD at 308-345-4223. SWNPHD serves Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Hayes, Hitchcock, Keith, Perkins and Red Willow counties. SWNPHD is located at 404 West 10th St (1 block north of Arby's) in McCook or at 501 Broadway in Imperial (5th St. entrance). Information can also be found on the website www.swhealth.ne.gov and on Facebook and Twitter.

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