

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Community-Transmitted COVID-19 Case Identified in Sarpy County

Additional travel-related cases reported in Lancaster, Buffalo and Douglas Counties

LINCOLN – A community transmitted case of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) was identified in Sarpy County today. The man in his 40s with underlying health issues tested positive yesterday and is currently hospitalized. Community transmission is when people have COVID-19 but public health officials can't identify how or where they became infected. This is the third community transmitted case of COVID-19. The other two were in Douglas County.

Sarpy County also identified a travel-related case of COVID-19. The person is a man in his 20s who recently traveled to Europe. He is currently self-isolating and recovering from symptoms at home - <https://www.sarpycasshealthdepartment.org/>

Five additional cases of COVID-19 were identified in three Nebraska counties.

- A man in his 40s from Lancaster County who recently traveled to Colorado. He is self-isolating at home - <https://www.lincoln.ne.gov/city/mayor/media/2020/032020a.htm>
- A woman in her 40s from Buffalo County who recently traveled and is currently self-isolating at home - <https://www.trphd.org/>.
- Three cases are in Douglas County. Two are men in their 40s and a woman in her 30s. All three of them had recently returned from areas in the Southeastern U.S. where COVID-19 is circulating - https://www.douglascountyhealth.com/images/News_Releases/03.20.20_March_20_Cases.pdf.

All local health departments involved have initiated close contact investigations to identify people who came into close contact to help prevent further spread. All identified close contacts will self-quarantine and be actively monitored twice daily by public health officials for fever and respiratory symptoms.

Public health officials say returning travelers should assume that COVID-19 is present at the locations they have visited and traveled through and follow these recommendations:

- **All** returning travelers, from any international or domestic location, should limit public interactions, practice strict social distancing, and self-monitor for symptoms.
- Returning travelers from regions with **widespread sustained transmission** (e.g., CDC Level 3 countries - <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices#alert> - plus U.S. locales such as Seattle, WA; New York City; and Santa Clara County, CA) should immediately self-quarantine.
- If a returning traveler develops fever or respiratory illness, they need to immediately self-isolate and report to a healthcare provider or local health department.

- Individuals unable to observe the 14-day self-quarantine should consult with their local health department about appropriate actions.
- Every health care worker who returns from travel should consult with a trained medical professional at their facility (e.g., infection preventionist or physician) and establish a specific infection control protocol (e.g., home quarantine, self-monitoring, personal protective equipment while at work) that mitigates patient and co-worker exposures

As of tonight, the state case total is 38. Both state and local health departments are testing and publicly reporting their cases. In the event of a discrepancy between DHHS cases and cases reported by local public health officials, data reported by the local health department should be considered the most up to date.

People who are concerned they may have COVID-19 should self-isolate and call ahead to their primary care provider to be screened over the phone.

Certain people are at higher risk of getting very sick from COVID-19 including older adults and people who have serious chronic medical conditions like heart disease, diabetes and lung disease, according to the CDC.

People in these higher-risk groups should:

- Stock up on supplies, including extra necessary medications.
- Take everyday precautions to keep space between yourself and others.
- When you go out in public, keep away from others who are sick, limit close contact and wash your hands often.
- Avoid crowds as much as possible.
- Avoid cruise travel and non-essential air travel.
- If there is a COVID-19 outbreak in your community, stay home as much as possible to further reduce your risk of being exposed.

Everyone can help reduce the spread of COVID-19 and other respiratory infections by:

- Avoiding close contact with sick people and stay home if you are sick.
- Washing hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water aren't available, use an alcohol-based sanitizer.
- Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Covering your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched objects and surfaces.

Here's where to find tools and resources for individuals and families, schools, communities, businesses, healthcare facilities, and first responders on the DHHS website - <http://dhhs.ne.gov/coronavirus> and CDC's website – <https://www.cdc.gov/covid19>.

DHHS opened a statewide coronavirus (COVID-19) information line to help answer general questions and share the latest information and resources with Nebraskans to help keep them informed. The number is (402) 552-6645; hours of operation are 8 a.m.-8 p.m. CST, 7 days a week.

DHHS will continue to update Nebraskans through the DHHS website and on Facebook and Twitter as we have new information. The CDC's website is also a good resource for COVID-19 information -<https://www.cdc.gov/covid19>.