

IREDELL COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Iredell County Health Department

NEWS RELEASE

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5:30 PM

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Iredell County identifies first case of Novel Coronavirus

Iredell County Health Department was notified on the afternoon of March 16, 2020, of the first presumptive positive case of novel coronavirus (COVID-19) in the county. The results have been sent to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) laboratory for final confirmation.

At this time, the individual is isolating at home and willingly cooperating with public health officials. Iredell County Health Department team members are monitoring the individual during their isolation and are identifying any close contacts to monitor symptoms and contain potential spread. To protect individual privacy, no further information will be shared. Today's announcement represents an isolated case. "The Iredell County Health Department is making all efforts to protect the health and well-being of this individual and the general public," said the Iredell County Health Director, Jane Hinson. COVID-19 is currently not widespread in Iredell County.

The mission of the Iredell County Health Department is to protect the personal, community, and environmental health of Iredell County residents. We have been working with community healthcare partners for several months to prepare for a potential case in order to properly detect and prevent the spread of this communicable disease. Due to the increasing emergence of Coronavirus (COVID-19) in NC, we want to assist our community in taking proactive steps to protect their health by sharing recommendations from the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NC DHHS) meant to slow the spread of the COVID-19 outbreak and reduce the number of people infected. We ask that our community remain calm and continue to follow health guidelines from the State and CDC that are being regularly updated on our website.

Because COVID-19 is most commonly spread through respiratory droplets, residents should take the same measures recommend annually to prevent the spread of the flu and other viruses:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.
- Stay home when you are sick.

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In order to decrease the spread of COVID-19 locally, we are encouraging the community to adhere to the Governor's mitigation recommendations and Executive Orders. On Saturday, March 14th, Governor Roy Cooper ordered all K-12 public schools in North Carolina to close for a minimum of two weeks in response to COVID-19. The Executive Order also bans gatherings of more than 100 people.

Individuals who suspect they might be experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 should **contact their primary care provider** to inform them about your symptoms so appropriate steps can be taken to protect yourself and others.

According to the CDC, patients with COVID-19 have reportedly had mild to severe respiratory illness, typically following international travel to regions with higher confirmed cases of COVID-19. Symptoms can include fever (100.5 degrees Fahrenheit), cough, and shortness of breath. **You are again strongly encouraged to reach out to your primary care provider before traveling to their site to alert them of your symptoms so they can take appropriate steps to protect you and others.**

It is important to make sure the information you are getting about COVID-19 is coming directly from reliable sources such as CDC, NCDHHS, and Iredell County Health Department not from social media outlets.

Residents with general questions can call the NC Division of Public Health Coronavirus Call Line 24 hours a day/7 days a week: **1-866-462-3821**. Nurses and pharmacists from the North Carolina Poison Control are available to answer questions.

Additional information related to COVID-19 can be found at the following resources:

NC DHHS-DPH: epi.dph.ncdhhs.gov/cd/diseases/2019nCoV.html

CDC: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html.

Iredell County Health Department: <https://nc-iredellcounty.civicplus.com/1383/Coronavirus-COVID-19>

North Carolina Public Information Hotline: 1-866-462-3821

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