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www.coconino.az.gov/hhs

For Immediate Release

County Health prepares for COVID-19

FLAGSTAFF, Ariz. – Coconino County Health and Human Services (CCHHS) is continuing to prepare for the potential spread of the COVID-19 illness with state and federal partners as well as local healthcare providers.

Health officials are communicating with a wide array of partners to explain processes regarding testing and identifying people who could potentially be infected with the virus. A person will be considered for testing if they are experiencing respiratory symptoms and have one of three variables; contact with someone who was tested positive, traveled to China or other areas experiencing community spread of the virus or respiratory testing has not identified a known illness. COVID-19 testing is conducted at the Arizona State Public Health Laboratory.

People with travel history to impacted areas that may have increased their likelihood for contracting the virus and are not displaying symptoms are under self-monitoring with guidance from the health department. Currently, there are less than ten people in the County who are in the self-monitoring status. There are currently no confirmed cases in Coconino County.

“Our team is working to educate our partners, including health care providers, about guidelines and processes, testing procedures and criteria for monitoring or isolation,” said CCHHS Chief Health Officer Thomas Pristow. “With the current spread of this virus, there is the possibility for an eventual confirmed case in northern Arizona. We encourage the public to stay calm and do their best to prevent respiratory illness. The County is also taking steps to prepare for the potential spread of the virus in northern Arizona and communicating with the public on how to keep safe.”

According to national public health officials, the immediate risk of COVID-19 infection to individuals in the United States is still believed to be low. However, current global circumstances suggest it is likely that this virus will continue to spread. As community spread is detected in more countries and cases are identified in the United States, the need for local preparedness is emphasized.

While much of the details of the virus are still unknown, the CDC is reporting a relatively low fatality rate compared to previous coronavirus outbreaks. Symptoms of COVID-19 may include fever, cough and shortness of breath consistent with pneumonia or other respiratory illness. Individuals who are experiencing symptoms and have traveled to an area where COVID-19 is circulating or have had close contact with a person with confirmed COVID-19, should contact their health care provider prior to visiting a health care facility.

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There is currently no vaccine to prevent COVID-19 infection. As a reminder, CCHHS recommends actions to help prevent the spread of respiratory viruses, including:

- Get a seasonal flu shot
- Wash hands frequently.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose or mouth.
- Avoid contact with people who are sick.
- Cover your mouth with your upper sleeve or with a tissue when coughing or sneezing.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

Additional preparedness information from the CDC can be found at:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/home/get-your-household-ready-for-COVID-19.html>

Please go to www.coconino.az.gov/covid19 for more information.

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