



COUNTY OF KENOSHA

John T. Jansen, Director
Department of Human Services

Jen Freiheit, Director, Health Officer
Division of Health Services
Job Center / Human Services Building
8600 Sheridan Road, Suite 600
Kenosha, WI 53143-6515
Phone: (262) 605-6700
Fax: (262) 605-6715

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News release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Jen Freiheit
Telephone: 262-605-6700
E-mail: Jen.Freiheit@kenoshacounty.org

Kenosha County Division of Health continues to closely monitor coronavirus outbreak

KENOSHA – The Kenosha County Division of Health, along with state and federal partners, is closely monitoring an outbreak of respiratory illness caused by a novel (new) coronavirus (2019-nCoV) that was first detected in Wuhan, China, and continues to expand.

Five cases have been confirmed in the United States – with one in Chicago on Jan. 24. These infected individuals had a history of recent travel to Wuhan, China.

The CDC has implemented public health entry screening at O’Hare International Airport in Chicago, as well as the international airports in Atlanta, Los Angeles, New York and San Francisco.

Locally, Kenosha County Division of Health Director Jen Freiheit said her staff is ready to communicate with the Wisconsin Department of Health Services and conduct investigations, if needed.

“We have developed our own internal investigative worksheet to ask questions like: ‘Did you travel to Wuhan?’ ‘How long were you there?’ ‘Who did you come in contact with?’” Freiheit said. “Our Communicable Disease Nurses are ready to collect specific information on a case-by-case basis that will support public health interventions.”

The Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) announced Monday that testing is in process for five people in the state. Results are pending on these cases. Test results for an additional patient under investigation was negative.

DHS is providing updates on 2019 novel coronavirus, including case counts, on its [Outbreaks and Investigations webpage](#). It will be updated by 2 p.m. each day.

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses, some causing illness in people and others that circulate among animals, including camels, cattle, cats and bats.

Rarely, animal coronaviruses can evolve and infect people. When person-to-person spread has occurred, it is thought to have happened via respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes, similar to how influenza virus and other respiratory pathogens spread.

At this time, it is not clear how easily 2019-nCoV spreads from person-to-person. Common signs of infection include fever, cough, shortness of breath, and breathing difficulties. In more severe cases, infection can cause pneumonia, kidney failure, and even death.

While public health authorities consider this a serious public health concern, based on current information, the immediate health risk from 2019-nCoV to the general American public is considered low at this time.

The Kenosha County Division of Health would like to remind residents that influenza has not yet peaked in southeastern Wisconsin and there are other common respiratory illnesses circulating at this time.

In Kenosha County, there were three confirmed influenza-associated hospitalizations in December, and the same number of such cases to date in January.

Individuals are encouraged to take every-day preventative actions including staying away from sick people and washing their hands to reduce the spread of germs.

People who have recently traveled to Wuhan, China, or have been in contact with an individual with 2019-nCoV and have signs of illness should contact their medical provider and local health department.

This continues to be a rapidly evolving situation. The Kenosha County Division of Health will continue to update the public as circumstances warrant.

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