Dear Public Health Partners:

We’re writing today to provide an update on the outbreak of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). Columbus Public Health and Franklin County Public Health continue to work in partnership with the Ohio Department of Health to monitor the situation, and are prepared to protect health and prevent the spread of infectious disease.

As of March 2, 2020, there are no confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Ohio.

Over the last week in the United States, several instances of community spread of COVID-19 occurred in California, Washington and Oregon. These cases occurred in people with no travel history and no known source of exposure. According to the CDC, for the general American public, who are unlikely to be exposed to this virus at this time, the immediate health risk from COVID-19 is considered low.

The U.S. expects to detect more COVID-19 cases through travel, as well as more person-to-person spread and community transmission of this virus. We are continuing to coordinate our local preparedness and response activities accordingly.

Please read the summaries below for an update on the COVID-19 outbreak and public health’s response – the accompanying links will direct you to more information.

As a reminder, this situation is a rapidly evolving and information will be updated as it becomes available. For the most accurate and current information on COVID-19, please continue to refer to the CDC website. You may also visit the Ohio Department of Health, Columbus Public Health and Franklin County Public Health websites for local information.

For questions, please contact:

- Columbus Public Health – Leslie diDonato at ljadionato@columbus.gov
- Franklin County Public Health – Mitzi Kline at mitzikline@franklincountyohio.gov

Background Information

COVID-19 (novel coronavirus) is a respiratory illness that originated in Wuhan, Hubei, China in December 2019. It has since spread internationally to multiple countries, including the United States. Those most at-risk for COVID-19 are people who have recently traveled to countries with sustained spread, including China, Japan, South Korea, Italy or Iran, or people have been in close contact with someone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19. Learn more.
What Public Health Is Doing

Columbus Public Health and Franklin County Public are working together and with the Ohio Department of Health to monitor the situation, and to plan an appropriate response. This includes working with ODH to implement the CDC’s self-quarantine and self-monitoring protocol for travelers returning from mainland China for 14 days. Learn more.

What You Can Do

The CDC does not recommend any additional precautions for the general public at this time beyond the usual steps that help to prevent the spread of illness and the flu, such as proper hand washing, covering coughs/sneeze with your arm, staying home when sick, and avoiding exposure to others who are sick.

The general public can also help by preventing the spread of misinformation about COVID-19, and by fighting fear and stigma with the understanding that you cannot tell if someone is at risk for spreading COVID-19 based on how they look. Treat everyone with compassion, kindness and respect. Learn more.