

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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First Coronavirus (COVID-19) Case Confirmed in the City of Milwaukee

MILWAUKEE- The City of Milwaukee Health Department (MHD) has confirmed Milwaukee's first presumptive case of novel coronavirus, COVID-19, health officials announced today. This individual was a close contact to a confirmed COVID-19 case.

MHD is awaiting confirmatory testing from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), but health officials consider the presumptive results actionable. The patient is a female aged 30-35 years of age and is currently isolating at home. MHD is in the process of identifying and contacting all those who may have come in contact with the infected person. Close contacts will be quarantined for 14 days from their exposure and will be monitored for fever and respiratory symptoms. The State of Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) has issued [guidelines for ending isolation and quarantine for patients](#).

"The City of Milwaukee has been working around the clock to prepare for this and I am confident that our Health Department is up to the challenge," Mayor Tom Barrett said. "Our Administration is collaborating with federal, state, and local partners as we monitor developments with this outbreak."

The City of Milwaukee Commissioner of Health, Jeanette Kowalik has acknowledged that COVID-19 would arrive in Milwaukee as it has been discovered in surrounding areas. MHD has been preparing for this through our Democratic National Convention (DNC) preparations and experience managing other outbreaks ranging from H1N1 influenza in 2009-2010 and vaccine preventable disease. "Now is the time to remember that we all have the ability to help slow the spread of the illness and protect our fellow Milwaukeeans.

"It is critical that all of us do our part to slow the spread of this virus by refraining from touching ones face, eyes, and nose, covering coughs, washing hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, and staying home when sick with cold or flu-like symptoms. We have also prepared for community mitigation measures including cancellations of large events and temporary school closures should they become necessary." Commissioner Kowalik said.

COVID-19 is spread by respiratory droplets when an infected person coughs or sneezes, similar to how flu and other respiratory diseases spread, or when people touch surfaces that have been contaminated by an infected person, and then touch their eyes, nose or mouth.

When to seek medical evaluation and advice:

- If you have symptoms like cough, fever over 100.4° F, or other respiratory problems such as shortness of breath and have either had contact with an individual who has COVID-19 or travelled to a Level 2 or 3 area domestically or internationally - call your primary healthcare provider or your regular doctor.
- Your primary health care provider will be able to collect the needed specimens for testing or refer the patient to an appropriate location. Testing of asymptomatic individuals is not feasible or advisable at this point in time.
- If you cannot see your primary care provider, please go to urgent care. Emergency rooms need to be able to serve those with the most critical needs.
- If you are having a life threatening emergency, call 911.

On Friday March 13th, Milwaukee County and the City of Milwaukee declared a public health emergency for COVID-19 due to the detection of the first case in the county and the city. According to Milwaukee County Executive Order #13-01: Designation of the City of Milwaukee Public Health Commissioner to Serve as the Director of Emergency Public Health Under the Milwaukee County Emergency Operations Plan, Commissioner Kowalik is now assuming a dual role and responsibility for the COVID-19 response at the city and county level. MHD is using the [CDC](#) and [DHS Community Mitigation](#) guidelines for a 3-tiered approach to community mitigation. Tier 1 was deferring closure decisions to business owners and event planners (was in effect prior to March 11th). Tier 2 is strongly recommending closures and rescheduling large events defined as having more than 250 people (was in effect March 12th). As of March 13th, the City of Milwaukee is now in tier 3:

Factors:

Enforce order of isolation (confirmed cases), quarantine (at risk due to disease exposure including travels to CDC designated level 3 international and domestic places), recommending limiting gatherings to 25 attendees, cancellation of large gatherings over 250 attendees, schools in jurisdictions with cases. [Follow DHS guidelines for assisted living and long term care facilities](#). MHD will begin to issue orders.

Decisions:

Mandatory Closures and Cancellations per [Wisconsin State Statute 252.01–.06](#)

Implications:

May include business meetings, conferences, summits, faith-based services such as temple, mass, church, events such as funerals, weddings, dances, parties, festivals, concerts, sporting events, and charity events such as runs/ walks. Must keep record of cleaning and prepare to share with local health department as requested. Continue to promote personal hygiene.

On Friday March 13th, Governor Evers and Department of Health Service (DHS) Secretary-designee Andrea Palm to issue an agency order mandating the statewide closure of all K-12 schools, public and private. The mandated closure will begin on Wednesday, March 18, 2020. The anticipated reopening date is April 6, 2020.

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