

# THIS IS AN OFFICIAL NH DHHS HEALTH ALERT

Distributed by the NH Health Alert Network  
[Health.Alert@nh.gov](mailto:Health.Alert@nh.gov)  
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## Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Outbreak Update # 4

### Key Points and Recommendations:

1. Join us Tuesday, March 3, 2020 at 12:00 noon for a webinar to discuss the COVID-19 epidemic, including the evolving public health response. The webinar can be accessed at the following link and call-in information:  
**Webinar link:** <https://zoom.us/j/852671104>  
**Call-in Number:** 1-646-558-8656  
**Meeting ID:** 852 671 104
2. In New Hampshire, there are currently no confirmed or suspect cases of COVID-19. However, in China and several other countries, there is sustained and widespread community transmission. You should monitor CDC's [travel advisories](#) in order to appropriately counsel patients about travel and to know which travel itineraries present a higher risk for COVID-19 in symptomatic returning travelers. Travel advisories currently include the following countries:
  - Level 3 Travel Warning (avoid all nonessential travel due to widespread community transmission): **Mainland China** and **South Korea**
  - Level 2 Travel Alert (practice enhanced precautions due to sustained community transmission): **Italy, Japan, Iran**
  - Level 1 Travel Watch (practice usual precautions but multiple instances of community spread have been reported): **Hong Kong**
3. DPHS recommends that healthcare reception and providers ask patients presenting with a fever or respiratory illness about travel to any country with a level 1, 2, or 3 travel advisory in the 14 days before symptom onset.
4. Any patient presenting with fever or respiratory illness within 14 days of travel to one of the listed countries should be evaluated under airborne infection isolation (All) with [recommended personal protective equipment \(PPE\)](#) and reported immediately to the NH Division of Public Health Services (DPHS) at 603-271-4496 (after hours 603-271-5300).
  - A surgical mask should be placed on the symptomatic patient; the healthcare worker should wear gloves, gown, eye protection, and a fit-tested N95 respirator or PAPR when evaluating the patient.
  - If recommended PPE or All is not available, we suggest limiting clinical evaluation as medically appropriate, and that minimally symptomatic patients who are not febrile nor short of breath (i.e., afebrile patients with only mild upper respiratory illness), and who are not in need of other medical attention, should be advised to stay at home and call if illness progresses. If more extensive medical attention is needed, the patient should be directed to a hospital for evaluation where appropriate PPE and isolation can be implemented.
5. The decision for COVID-19 testing will be made based on a patient's travel risk factors, any exposure to sick individuals in other countries, the patient's presenting signs and

symptoms, and testing capacity. Currently COVID-19 testing is only available at the U.S. CDC, but in the coming weeks our NH Public Health Laboratories (PHL) will receive test kits from CDC and implement testing.

6. Any patient presenting with mild respiratory illness within 14 days of travel who do not need hospitalization and do not undergo COVID-19 testing should be instructed to stay at home and away from public places until their symptoms resolve and they begin to feel better. They should also be instructed that if their symptoms worsen they should take their temperature and seek health advice by phone from their healthcare provider or the NH DPHS by calling 603-271-4496 (after hours 603-271-5300).
7. Asymptomatic travelers from **China** should still be instructed to stay at home, avoid public settings, and self-monitor for symptoms for 14 days from their last day of travel to China. Travelers should contact the NH DPHS at 603-271-4496 (after hours 603-271-5300) if they develop fever or respiratory illness within 14 days of travel.
8. Asymptomatic travelers to countries with identified COVID-19 community transmission other than China (i.e., those with a travel advisory) should be instructed to monitor for fever or respiratory symptoms. Travelers that feel feverish or develops respiratory symptoms should take their temperature, immediately limit contact with others, and seek health advice by phone from their healthcare provider or DPHS by calling 603-271-4496 (after hours 603-271-5300).

#### **Situational Update:**

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) is the new name for the illness caused by the newly identified severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus virus 2 (SARS-CoV-2, formerly called 2019 novel coronavirus [2019-nCoV]). There are currently more than 80,000 cases of COVID-19 from more than 35 different countries, including several countries outside of mainland China that have more sustained or widespread community transmission, including South Korea, Japan, Italy, and Iran. There has not been sustained community transmission identified in the U.S. and currently there are 14 confirmed travel-associated COVID-19 cases in the U.S. in the states of California, Illinois, Arizona, Massachusetts, Texas, Washington State, and Wisconsin. There are an additional 45 individuals confirmed with COVID-19 who were repatriated to the U.S. from Hubei Province China or from the Diamond Princess cruise ship. There are no current cases of COVID-19 identified in New Hampshire.

Given the global expansion of the outbreak and identified community transmission in countries outside of China, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is promoting mitigation strategies for controlling spread and decreasing impact if/when the novel coronavirus is identified to cause more sustained community transmission in the U.S. NH DPHS is monitoring for potential cases and taking precautions to limit the impact if the virus is found in NH. We continue to engage partners to plan for the potential need to implement community mitigation and medical surge measures. We recommend that healthcare providers continue to reinforce everyday strategies that are important for preventing the spread of COVID-19 and other common respiratory viruses, including the following:

- Stay home and avoid public places when sick (i.e. social distancing)
- Cover mouth and nose when coughing and sneezing
- Wash hands frequently
- Avoid being within 6 feet (close contact) of a person who is sick
- Avoid sharing drinks, smoking/vaping devices, or other utensils or objects that may transmit saliva
- Disinfect frequently touched surfaces

Additional information about personal protective measures, environmental cleaning, and community-based strategies to prevent respiratory virus transmission can be found here: <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/66/rr/rr6601a1.htm>

**To discuss this rapidly changing COVID-19 outbreak, please join us for a webinar on Tuesday, March 3, 2020 at 12:00 noon to discuss important changes and new guidance. The webinar can be accessed at the following link and call-in information:**

**Webinar link:** <https://zoom.us/j/852671104>  
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#### **Additional Information**

- CDC 2019-nCoV website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
  - CDC Information for Healthcare Professionals: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/guidance-hcp.html>
- World Health Organization 2019-nCoV website: <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>
- NH DHHS 2019-nCoV website: <https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/cdcs/2019-ncov.htm>
- For any questions regarding this notification, please call the NH DHHS, DPHS, Bureau of Infectious Disease Control at (603) 271-4496 during business hours (8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.).
- If you are calling after hours or on the weekend, please call the New Hampshire Hospital switchboard at (603) 271-5300 and request the Public Health Professional on-call.
- To change your contact information in the NH Health Alert Network, contact Adnela Alic at (603) 271-7499 or email [Adnela.Alic@dhhs.nh.gov](mailto:Adnela.Alic@dhhs.nh.gov).

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From: Benjamin P. Chan, MD, MPH, State Epidemiologist  
Originating Agency: NH Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health Services

**Attachments: None**