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Raymond, Rochester, Sturtevant, Union Grove, Yorkville,
Town and Village of Waterford, Town and City of Burlington)*

(City of Racine, Elmwood Park and Wind Point)

For Immediate Release

LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENTS PREPARING TO PREVENT COVID-19 (NOVEL CORONAVIRUS) SPREAD IN RACINE COUNTY

Central Racine County Health Department (CRCHD) and City of Racine Public Health Department (RPHD) are responding to the rapidly evolving outbreak of COVID-19 (novel coronavirus). To date, there have been three confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Wisconsin. According to Dottie-Kay Bowersox, RPHD Administrator and Margaret Gesner, Health Officer for CRCHD, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has indicated that the US should expect many more cases of the disease and so they are urging the public to get prepared.

New CDC recommendations indicate that people at higher risk of getting very sick from COVID-19 should now: 1) have enough household items, groceries, and medications on hand so that you will be prepared to stay at home for a period of time, 2) take everyday precautions to keep space between themselves and others, 3) when going out in public, keep away from others who are sick, limit close contact and wash hands often, and 4) avoid crowds as much as possible. People at higher risk of getting sick from COVID-19 include older adults and people with a serious chronic medical condition like heart disease, diabetes, and lung disease. The general public is advised to continue to practice healthy habits:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth
- Stay home when you are sick
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash
- Clean, disinfect frequently touched objects/surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
- If it is not an emergency and you get sick, call your healthcare provider before seeking care

CRCHD and RPHD note that it is important for the public to make a plan before a COVID-19 outbreak occurs in the community. Residents should create a household plan of action, be prepared if a child's school or childcare facility is temporarily dismissed, and plan for potential changes at the workplace (go to <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/protect/prepare.html>).

CRCHD and RPHD are coordinating the COVID-19 response, and their roles include:

- Planning and coordinating with Healthcare, EMS, Law Enforcement, Dispatch, Schools, Childcare Agencies, Long Term Care Facilities, Municipalities, Businesses, and other partner agencies
- Relaying CDC guidance to partner agencies
- Implementing COVID-19 surveillance and investigation, and isolation and quarantine as indicated
- Planning for possible social distancing recommendations should COVID-19 become widespread. Examples include asking employers to offer flexible sick leave and telecommute options as well as other ways to minimize close contact with large numbers of people; postponing of events and gatherings to minimize risk of spreading disease; if indicated, recommending closing schools
- Answering questions from the public and the community
- Providing risk communication to the public via social media and other venues

For the latest guidance and to stay informed, go to CDC's COVID-19 Situation Summary at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/summary.html>.

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