



## DPH Statement on Novel Coronavirus Activities from Director Dr. Karyl Rattay, MD, MS

With recent cases of 2019 novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) reported in several countries including the U.S., health officials across the nation are increasing monitoring efforts to identify potential cases. The Division of Public Health (DPH) is issuing information to provide details about our activities and guidance related to the outbreak. DPH has posted information about 2019-nCoV on its website <https://dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/dph>. If you are not currently signed up to receive DPH Health Alerts (HANs) and would like to subscribe, you may register at <https://healthalertde.org>.

### What you need to know:

- Currently the risk to the general public in the U.S. is considered low.
- Risk for 2019-nCoV is based on exposure. Those individuals with recent travel to any area of China or contact with someone who has recent travel and is ill, have an increased risk for becoming ill. (See below updates from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)).
- With over two thousand flu-related cases and five deaths statewide, most of the population is at greater risk of contracting seasonal influenza than coronavirus.
- We continue to ask providers to alert us if a person with recent travel to any area of China, becomes sick with respiratory symptoms. If this is the case, we ask that you contact the DPH Office of Infectious Disease Epidemiology at 1-888-295-5156.
- The public is being encouraged to call ahead to their health care provider if they are concerned about the possibility of having been infected with 2019-nCoV. If they do not call before arriving at your office, ensure your screening protocols are in place at the front desk and masks are readily available. **Patients arriving for evaluation of any respiratory illness (including 2019-nCoV), should be asked to wear a surgical mask** as soon as they are identified.
- **Patients being sent to another health care facility from their primary care provider, or urgent care center, should be masked to limit transmission of respiratory secretions.**
- CDC Guidance for Health Care Professionals:  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/hcp/clinical-criteria.html>

### Changes to the current definition of a Patient Under Investigation (PUI) as of 1/31/2020:

Patients under investigation will meet one of the following categories:

- 1) Fever AND lower respiratory symptoms + Travel to Wuhan City/Hubei Province, China within 14 days of onset



- 2) Fever AND lower respiratory symptoms requiring hospitalization + Travel to anywhere in mainland China within 14 days of onset
- 3) Fever OR lower respiratory symptoms + close contact with a laboratory-confirmed case within 14 days of onset

Clinical Features	&	Epidemiologic Risk
Fever <sup>1</sup> or signs/symptoms of lower respiratory illness (e.g. cough or shortness of breath)	AND	Any person, including health care workers, who has had close contact <sup>2</sup> with a laboratory-confirmed <sup>3,4</sup> 2019-nCoV patient within 14 days of symptom onset
Fever <sup>1</sup> and signs/symptoms of a lower respiratory illness (e.g., cough or shortness of breath)	AND	A history of travel from <b>Hubei Province</b> , China within 14 days of symptom onset
Fever <sup>1</sup> and signs/symptoms of a lower respiratory illness (e.g., cough or shortness of breath) requiring hospitalization <sup>5</sup>	AND	A history of travel from mainland <b>China</b> within 14 days of symptom onset

Summary of updates to information about clinical presentation as of 1/30/2019

- Incubation period ~5 days (95% confidence interval 4-7 days)
- Frequently reported signs/symptoms: fever, cough, myalgia/fatigue and some sore throat; shortness of breath and other symptoms of lower respiratory infections are also part of the current CDC case definition for patients under investigation:
  - Fever may be prolonged and intermittent
  - Sputum production, headache, hemoptysis and diarrhea infrequently reported
  - Asymptomatic infection has been described in one child with lab-confirmed infection and chest CT abnormalities
- Older patients, people with chronic medical conditions thought to be at highest risk

Patients should be evaluated in a private room (three walls and a door) with the door closed, ideally an airborne infection isolation room if available. Health care personnel entering the room should use standard precautions, contact precautions, airborne precautions, and use eye protection (e.g., goggles or a face shield). Immediately notify DPH at 1-888-295-5156.

When suspected cases are reported to the DPH Office of Infectious Disease Epidemiology (OIDE), OIDE will consult with the provider and then the CDC regarding the need for testing. If CDC confirms the patient meets the case definition for testing,



laboratory samples are collected and submitted to CDC for confirmatory testing. This testing can take several days. Results will be reported back to the DPH Lab.

We have had a handful of calls from providers and have followed up. If at any point testing confirms a case of novel Coronavirus in a Delaware resident, the available details and protective recommendations would be shared with both the affected parties and the public as quickly as possible.

There is no specific antiviral treatment recommended for 2019-nCoV infection. People infected with 2019-nCoV should receive supportive care to help relieve symptoms. DPH is not recommending exclusion from work/school of asymptomatic persons arriving from China, however, employers/administrators should review their own protocols and procedures to determine the need for exclusion on a case-by-case basis.

DPH has also issued guidance to Emergency Medical Services responders regarding what to do if they are called to transport someone suspected to be infected with 2019-nCoV. DPH is holding frequent internal calls to ensure a constant flow of communication, and we are developing materials such as flyers to help the public understand what this virus is, and what they can do to protect themselves. We ask that you post the attached flyers (English, Spanish, Haitian Creole, CDC Simplified Chinese) around your facilities to educate patients on the virus and prevention techniques.

When a new disease is circulating, it's natural for people to ask what they can do to protect themselves and their families. The best guidance at this point is to continue to advise patients to take the same precautions recommended for avoiding colds and flu: People should stay home when they are sick, cover their cough and practice good hand washing, and get the flu vaccine if they have not already done so. Patients who have recently returned from a trip to China and are feeling sick, should call their health care provider and let them know of their travel and symptoms.

Finally, it is important to recognize that the current investigation and response are dynamic, and new information about the disease may impact the approach to this disease. DPH will keep you updated as changes occur.