

For Immediate Release



OAKLAND COUNTY EXECUTIVE DAVID COULTER

NEWS RELEASE

Bill Mullan, Media & Communications Officer
Office: (248) 858-1048 | Cell: (248) 202-9665 | mullanw@oakgov.com

Coulter Declares State of Emergency as County Moves to Assist Residents, Communities and Businesses Affected by COVID-19

PONTIAC, Mich., March 13, 2020 — Oakland County Executive David Coulter today declared a state of emergency in the county, allowing him to shift resources quickly to assist residents, businesses and communities affected by the spread of the coronavirus.

Coulter said the declaration was necessary to open a path for federal funds, should they become available. The county has established the Oakland County Help Hotline – 248-858-1000 – to address non-health needs of the general public such as food or housing assistance.

“We will take all necessary steps to slow the spread of this virus,” Coulter said. “The effects of this public health emergency are still unfolding, and we want to ensure that people with immediate needs get help as quickly as possible.

The hotline will be staffed from 8 a.m.-8 p.m. Callers with specific needs will be directed to county departments and divisions that can help or to other agencies and programs that can assist.

“A state of emergency is meant to reassure Oakland County residents that we are leveraging every resource to contain the virus,” Coulter said.

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services Thursday announced two additional presumptive positive cases of COVID-19 in Oakland County resulting in three total cases in the county. Both new cases are adult males, one with no known travel history, the other with history of domestic travel. The Oakland County Health Division is identifying close contacts of these individuals, assessing for risk and determining management of those exposed.

The public should be alert for symptoms of COVID-19. Symptoms include fever, cough and shortness of breath. If any develop, stay at home and promptly call a healthcare provider or hospital prior to arriving so that the appropriate preventive measures can be put in place.

Coulter directed the following actions as part of the county's ongoing coronavirus response, including the full activation of the Emergency Operations Center to enable the county to assist our partners and stakeholders with coordinating resources and response to this public health emergency:

- Public health orders to enforce actions aimed at reducing disease spread may be implemented.
- Continue essential county services; support online options; explore grace periods and fee reductions; encourage teleworking and expansion of emergency leave policies to support county employees.
- Intensify social distancing strategies by employers, faith-based institutions and entertainment venues.
- Support for students out of school and in need of healthy food options and health care services.

Some people that may be at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness include older adults or people with serious chronic medical conditions such as heart or lung disease and diabetes.

“The best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to the virus,” said Leigh-Anne Stafford, health officer for Oakland County. “The simple everyday actions you take to help avoid the spread of flu and other illnesses will also help prevent the spread of coronaviruses.”

Prevention tips include:

- Washing your hands often with soap and warm water for 20 seconds, and help young children do the same. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol.
- Covering your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, or cough/sneeze in your upper sleeve. Immediately throw away used tissues in the trash, then wash hands.
- Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Staying home when sick except to get medical care.
- Avoiding close contact, sharing cups, or sharing eating utensils.
- Cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched surfaces, such as toys and doorknobs.
- Practicing good health habits. Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids and eat nutritious food.

It is also suggested that residents be prepared with the following supplies:

- Maintain a two-week supply of water and food at home
- Routinely check your regular prescription drugs to ensure that you won't run out
- Keep non-prescription drugs and other health supplies on hand
- Get copies and maintain electronic versions of health records
- Talk with family members about how they would be cared for if they got sick and what would be needed to care for them in your home

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention does not recommend that people who

are well wear a facemask to protect themselves from respiratory illnesses, including COVID-19.

Patients with COVID-19 have reportedly had mild to severe respiratory illness. There is currently no vaccine to prevent COVID-19 infection. Sustained community spread of COVID-19 is occurring globally. Older adults and people of any age with serious chronic medical conditions are at increased risk for severe disease and should postpone nonessential travel. Visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for detailed information about international and domestic travel notices.

Preparedness planning toolkits and prevention resources are available at www.oakgov.com/health for the public, healthcare providers, businesses, schools, childcare centers, faith-based organizations, senior centers, food service workers and first responders. The toolkits include links to interim guidance from the CDC, prevention signage and handouts, and tools such as social media posts specific to various settings.

Visit Oakland County Health Division's Coronavirus website regularly for updated information to this evolving situation. For more information about COVID-19, visit www.oakgov.com/health or call Nurse on Call at 800-848- 5533, Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m. For up-to-date public health information, follow @publichealthOC on Facebook and Twitter.

For media inquiries only, please contact Bill Mullan, Oakland County media & communications officer, at 248 858-1048.

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