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PRESS RELEASE
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NH DHHS Preparations for Novel Coronavirus *~State offers precautions to mitigate virus spread~*

Concord, NH – As reports of the 2019 novel coronavirus continue, the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Division of Public Health Services (DPHS) is monitoring for potential cases and taking precautions to limit the impact if the virus is found in New Hampshire. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and state and local health departments are closely monitoring the outbreak. Currently, the CDC has confirmed five infections of novel coronavirus in the U.S. from four states, and is testing more than 100 additional individuals across the U.S.

Healthcare providers have been asked to alert DPHS if they identify patients with travel to Wuhan City/Hubei Province, China, who become ill with fever or respiratory symptoms within 14 days of travel so as to assist with testing and ensure isolation of the ill patients to prevent potential spread of a novel coronavirus. There are currently two individuals in New Hampshire with recent travel to Wuhan City, China, who have developed respiratory symptoms and are currently undergoing testing for novel coronavirus. These people have more mild illness, but both sought healthcare for their illnesses and are recovering. They remain isolated until test results are available. Samples have been sent to the CDC for testing. If testing confirms a case of novel coronavirus in New Hampshire, DPHS will share that information and protective recommendations with both the affected parties and the public as quickly as possible.

“The risk to our communities in New Hampshire is low, but we want to identify people who may be infected with this new coronavirus in order to prevent spread,” said State Epidemiologist Dr. Benjamin Chan. “We have recommended that healthcare providers conduct travel screenings and implement isolation practices for patients with a fever or respiratory illness who report travel to this affected region of China. This is a rapidly changing situation, and we remain committed to providing timely updates to residents of New Hampshire and our health care providers.”

The novel coronavirus outbreak is a rapidly evolving situation and it is still unknown how easily it spreads, but person-to-person transmission has been identified. Reported symptoms of illness have included primarily fever, cough, and difficulty breathing. There are currently no vaccines available to protect against the novel coronavirus. The CDC recommends taking precautionary measures similar to those for flu prevention, including frequent handwashing with soap and water, avoiding sick people, staying home if you are sick, covering your nose

and mouth when sneezing or coughing, and cleaning and disinfecting surfaces and objects that may be contaminated with germs. These steps can help prevent infection from many different viruses circulating this time of year.

Those planning a trip to China should keep an eye on the news and be aware of any travel restrictions. Residents 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.

For more information on novel coronavirus, please visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>.

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