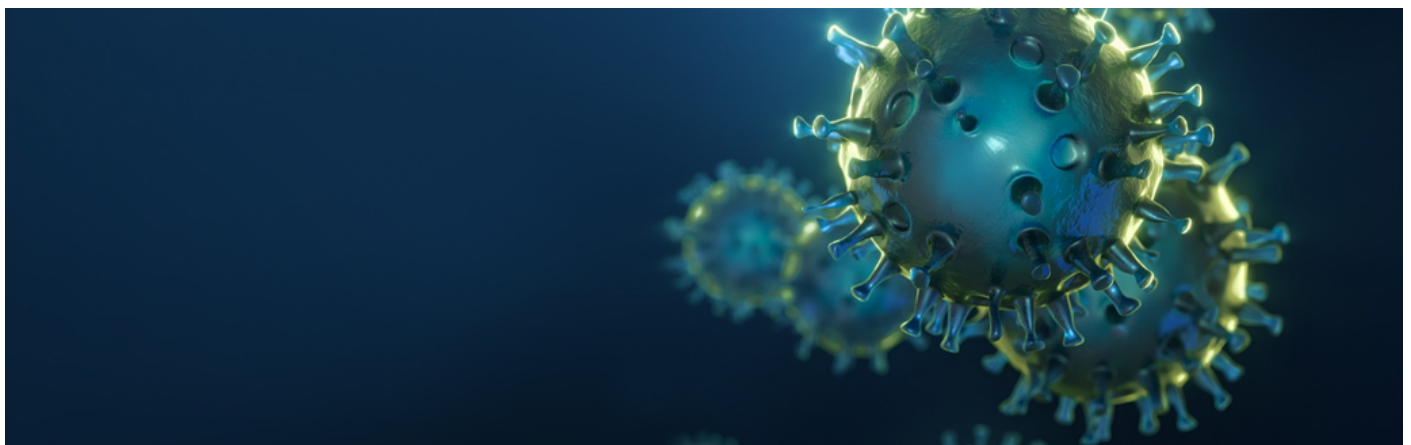

Governor DeWine, Health Director Update COVID-19 Prevention and Preparedness Plan

February 27, 2020



(CLEVELAND, Ohio)—Ohio Governor Mike DeWine was joined by Ohio Department of Health Director Amy Acton, MD, MPH; Cuyahoga County Health Director Terry Allan, MPH; and MetroHealth President and CEO, Akram Boutros, M.D., FACHE today gave an update on the state's preparedness and education efforts to limit the potential spread of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). There are no confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Ohio nor anyone currently under investigation for the virus.

“I want to be clear that the threat of Coronavirus in Ohio and the United States remains low,” said Governor Mike DeWine, “but this could change, and we have to be prepared. I believe it is imperative that we are open with the public and are communicating information in real-time

about the Coronavirus to both inform and educate our communities. We will communicate what we know, when we know it.”

COVID-19 is a respiratory virus strain that has only spread in people since December 2019. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) continues to consider the health risk from COVID-19 to be low among the general public in the U.S. However, COVID-19 continues to be an issue of concern internationally and there is potential for an eventual community person-to-person spread to occur in this country.

“Since the start of this outbreak, we’ve taken a proactive approach to prepare and carefully monitor potential cases and travelers about COVID-19 in Ohio,” said Dr. Acton. “As the CDC advised, we need to be prepared for community spread of COVID-19. We are working to make sure our healthcare partners, first responders, state agencies, and local health departments have the resources they need to respond.”

Today Governor DeWine ordered the following action by state agencies:

- The Ohio Department of Transportation will post information from the Ohio Department of Health in all state rest areas on hand washing protocols including messages on Ohio Travel TV.
- The Departments of Rehabilitation and Corrections and Youth Services will increase frequency and use of disinfectant measures in all their state facilities to protect inmates, families, and staff.
- The Governor called on Ohio college and university leaders to urge every student and faculty member on their campuses who have not yet received an influenza shot to get one at their health clinic immediately.
- The Governor is asking our college and university leaders to prohibit college travel to nations where the CDC has recommended no travel, such as China and South Korea.
- The Governor is asking college and universities to take appropriate action to accommodate students who are studying abroad and may need to come back to the United States.
- The Governor is asking the Ohio Department of Aging to continue working with local aging networks to identify the most vulnerable older adults with the highest needs to make sure

that plans are in place to meet their needs - whether that is providing additional meals or additional medication or other personal care needs.

- The Governor is asking local aging advocates across Ohio to go out into their communities to check on nursing care facilities to ensure that all illness prevention methods are in place.
- The State of Ohio will also be paying aggressive attention to common areas in state-owned buildings, including significantly increased cleaning frequency of these areas and hand sanitizer stations in common lobbies and hallways.

Governor DeWine announced that on Thursday of next week, the state will be convening a summit in Columbus for all of Ohio's local public health departments and health commissioners and staff that will include members of the Governor's Cabinet.

Symptoms of the COVID-19 in people who have been exposed can include fever, cough and shortness of breath. The symptoms may appear in as few as two days or as long as 14 days after exposure. Reported illnesses have ranged from people with little-to-no symptoms to people becoming severely ill and dying.

“As this situation evolves, we will continually update Ohioans through our website, odh.ohio.gov, our Facebook page and our Twitter account,” said Dr. Acton “It’s important to remember that the most accurate and timely information regarding this outbreak is available through the Ohio Department of Health, as well as the CDC.”

For information and updates related to COVID-19, visit the Ohio Department of Health website at www.odh.ohio.gov or coronavirus.ohio.gov

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