March 4, 2020

Dear Residents and Families,

At the District of Columbia Housing Authority (DCHA), we are committed to ensuring the well-being of all of our residents and families. We’d like to take this opportunity to provide an important update around coronavirus (also known as COVID-19).

On Friday, Mayor Muriel Bowser signed a Mayor’s Order to establish D.C. Health and the D.C. Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency as the lead agencies directing the District’s preparation, monitoring, and response. As of Tuesday, March 3rd the D.C. Department of Health reports there are no confirmed cases of coronavirus in Washington, D.C. But as with any public health concern, we need to be prepared and informed.

Prevention is everyone’s priority at this time, especially during cold and flu season. Common coronaviruses can cause symptoms similar to a common cold, such as fever, cough, sore throat, and feeling unwell. The symptoms that are currently being seen with the current coronavirus infection are fever and respiratory symptoms such as cough and shortness of breath. D.C. Health continues to recommend the same precautions that help to prevent the spread of those common illnesses:

- Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. An alcohol-based hand sanitizer can be used if soap and water are not available.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home when feeling sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in a trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

We are ensuring that all lobbies and common areas are stocked with soap as well as maintaining custodial protocols for cleaning and disinfecting. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has a helpful handwashing resource page with activities for families and videos in multiple languages. Please visit www.cdc.gov for additional information.

We are monitoring the situation and working closely with D.C. Health and other District agencies on emergency preparedness procedures, as well as following guidance from the CDC regarding planning for a coronavirus outbreak.

The District Government will continue to share critical updates around coronavirus on the D.C. Health website: https://coronavirus.dc.gov/. Please be assured that the health and safety of our residents is our primary concern.

Sincerely,

Tyrone Garrett
Executive Director
2019-nCoV: What the public should do

The current outbreak of 2019 novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) was first identified in China but has now spread internationally, impacting an increasing number of countries. Sustained community spread is occurring in China. Limited person-to-person spread, most associated with close contact with a patient with confirmed 2019-nCoV, has been seen outside of China. No community spread of 2019-nCoV has been identified in the United States at this time.

In the coming days and weeks, we expect more confirmed cases in the United States, including some person-to-person spread. The goal of CDC’s aggressive ongoing public health response is to prevent spread of 2019-nCoV in in the United States.

What you should do

- **STAY INFORMED** – CDC is updating its website daily with the latest information and advice for the public. ([www.cdc.gov/nCoV](http://www.cdc.gov/nCoV))

- **REMEMBER TO TAKE EVERYDAY PREVENTIVE ACTIONS** that are always recommended to prevent the spread of respiratory viruses.
  - Avoid close contact with sick people.
  - While sick, limit contact with others as much as possible.
  - Stay home if you are sick.
  - Cover your nose and mouth when you cough or sneeze. Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands; germs spread this way.
  - Clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that may be contaminated with germs.
  - Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub with at least 60% alcohol.

- **IF YOU FEEL SICK** with fever, cough, or difficulty breathing, and have traveled to China or were in close contact with someone with 2019-nCoV in the 14 days before you began to feel sick, seek medical care. Before you go to a doctor’s office or emergency room, call ahead and tell them about your recent travel and your symptoms.

What you should not do

- **DO NOT** travel to China.

- **DO NOT** use facemasks. CDC does not recommend the use of facemasks for the general U.S. public to prevent the spread of 2019-nCoV.

- **DO NOT** show prejudice to people of Asian descent, because of fear of this new virus. Do not assume that someone of Asian descent is more likely to have 2019-nCoV.

All persons in the U.S.—including those of Asian descent—who have not traveled to China or been in contact with someone with a confirmed or suspected nCoV case in the last 14 days are at low risk of becoming sick.
Patients with COVID-19 have experienced mild to severe respiratory illness.

Symptoms* can include:

- **Fever**
- **Cough**
- **Shortness of Breath**

*Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure.

If you have been in China or in close contact with someone with confirmed COVID-19 in the past 2 weeks and develop symptoms, call your doctor.

For more information: [www.cdc.gov/COVID19](http://www.cdc.gov/COVID19)