



## RICE COUNTY

320 Third Street N.W.  
Faribault, MN 55021

### **PRESS RELEASE**

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**March 5, 2020**

#### **Be Prepared - Coronavirus**

Reports of worldwide spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19) have been more frequent in the past week. Rice County Public Health would like to share the following information in order to help keep Rice County citizens informed and to help with preparedness activities. The safety of Rice County residents is important!

Currently there are no COVID-19 cases in Minnesota. Globally there are more than 97,000 confirmed cases, with slightly more than 200 confirmed cases in the U.S. and 12 deaths. Even though the U.S. number is relatively small, we must anticipate that one or more cases of COVID-19 will be confirmed in Minnesota in the weeks to come.

The good news is that there is a window of opportunity before that happens, for individuals, families and communities to make practical preparations which can help decrease the spread of disease.

Because the virus is a new kind of infection, there are not normal medical interventions at our disposal. This means we need to rely on “non-pharmaceutical interventions,” and preparedness activities to minimize the spread of the virus and to reduce demands on our health care sector so the most seriously ill people get the supportive care they need.

#### **What is COVID-19:**

- COVID-19 is a viral respiratory illness caused by a coronavirus that has not been found in people before.
- Patients with confirmed COVID-19 have had mild to severe respiratory illness with symptoms of fever, cough and shortness of breath. The risk of severe illness seems to be higher for older people and those with underlying health conditions.

#### **How is Rice County Public Health Responding?**

- Rice County Public Health is in close contact with the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) and receives regular updates on coronavirus.
- Rice County Public Health is working with MDH to ensure accurate information is being communicated to community partners to be prepared for potential cases.
- Rice County Public Health disseminates health alerts or advisories from MDH to local health care providers and community partners to streamline communications in order to help protect the public.
- The Minnesota Department of Health will take the lead in case investigation of suspected or confirmed cases. If a case occurs in Rice County, there would be coordination and communication with local public health.
- Rice County Public Health will be responsible to assure that essential services are available if individuals are placed in isolation or quarantine in Rice County.
- Rice County Public Health staff have 24/7 contact information available to MDH, for notification of any necessary services in Rice County.
- Coordination and communication is occurring between Rice County Public Health, local health care providers, and other community partners in Rice County regarding coronavirus information and emergency preparedness efforts.

### **What can you do?**

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick
- If you are sick, keep your distance from others to protect them from getting sick
- Wash your hands often and thoroughly with soap and water
- Cover your coughs and sneezes
- Stay home when you are sick
- Develop a plan for your household now, so you are ready in case someone gets sick.
- Make sure you have needed supplies on hand, in case you are sick and can't leave the house. This includes basic things like over-the-counter medicines, non-perishable foods (like cans of soup), refills on your prescription medications, tissues, hand sanitizer, etc.

### **Stay informed**

- The most up to date information about COVID-19 can be found on the MDH and CDC websites:

CDC website on Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19):

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

Minnesota Department of Health - Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19):

<https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/index.html>

CDC website on household preparedness:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/get-your-household-ready-for-COVID-19.html>

CDC guidance on travel:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>

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