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January 26, 2019

Dear LA County Colleague,

INFORM THE PUBLIC AND HELP PREVENT THE SPREAD OF NOVEL CORONAVIRUS (2019-nCoV)

As many of you are already aware, there is an outbreak of pneumonia in Wuhan, China, that has been identified to be caused by a novel (NEW) coronavirus (2019-nCoV). There are ongoing investigations by many countries to learn more about the outbreak, and the situation is rapidly evolving.

Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (Public Health) is working with federal, state, and local partners including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) and health care providers to prepare and appropriately care for people who may be at risk for illness associated with novel coronavirus or who have tested positive for novel coronavirus.

Below you will find information on the novel coronavirus, what Public Health is doing to ensure the safety of residents and health care workers, and actions that can be taken to prevent spread of respiratory illness. Also included is a FAQ and infographic for distribution to members in your community.

What is novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV)?

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that cause diseases of varying severities, ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases, such as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS). Coronaviruses cause infections that usually exist exclusively in animals, but some can be transmitted from animals to humans. And some of those are also transmitted from person to person, while others are not. In general, transmission of coronaviruses is most likely while a person has symptoms.

This is a new virus called a novel coronavirus (CoV) because it is a new strain of coronavirus that has not been previously identified in humans. The symptoms of novel coronavirus include fever, cough, and difficulty breathing. Health officials across the world are actively collecting information about clinical manifestations of this new virus and who is at risk for infection.

How and where did the Coronavirus originate?

Since December 2019, Chinese authorities preliminarily identified more than 2,000 of cases, and as of January 26th 56 deaths, associated with this novel (new) coronavirus in an outbreak of pneumonia in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China. This number continues to increase. In addition, novel coronavirus infections have been confirmed in several travelers who traveled to or came from Wuhan City or were in close contact with a person who was infected with novel coronavirus, including four travelers in the United States located in Washington State, Chicago, Orange County and Los Angeles.

How is Novel Coronavirus treated?

There is no vaccine for novel coronavirus. People who traveled to or from Wuhan or were in close contact with someone who was infected with novel coronavirus and develop a fever and fever or respiratory symptoms within 14 days of their travel or exposure should seek medical care. There is no current specific treatment for disease caused by a novel coronavirus, although scientists are working on testing medication options. However, many of the symptoms can be treated and effective treatment is based on the patient's clinical condition.

Although we are taking this novel virus seriously, CDC currently estimates the threat to the United States to be low. **Travelers to and from Wuhan who have no symptoms of respiratory illness should not be excluded from any activities.**

What is Public Health doing in response?

Public Health will continue assisting the CDC to ensure that travelers from Wuhan City or people connected with a confirmed case that have a fever or respiratory symptoms upon arrival to LAX are appropriately screened, tested and receive care. Travelers from Wuhan City who are not ill are provided with information on symptoms and advised to seek care if they become ill while visiting LA County. While there is no cure for this virus, our hospital partners and clinical providers will be able to test and care for ill travelers to minimize transmission and severe illness. Public Health issued a new health advisory informing local healthcare providers in LA County of the current situation on January 17, 2020. Our team from Acute Communicable Disease Control (ACDC) will continue providing updates and working with local healthcare providers as the situation evolves.

If you or someone you know has traveled to Wuhan and feel sick, please:

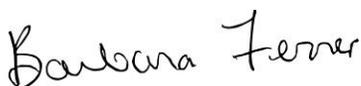
- Stay home and avoid contact with others, except for seeking medical care.
- Seek medical care right away. Before you go to a doctor's office or emergency room, call ahead and tell them about your recent travel and your symptoms.
- Do not travel while sick.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when coughing or sneezing.
- Wash your hands frequently.

If you work at a hospital, it is recommended that you:

- Follow standard environmental infection control procedures for healthcare settings.
- Ask all patients about recent travel.
- Post signs that ask students and families to follow standard hygiene practices, such as:
 - Washing hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds. Using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not on hand.
 - Covering their nose and mouth with their elbow or a tissue when coughing or sneezing.
 - Avoiding touching their eyes, nose, and mouth.
 - Limiting close contact, like kissing and sharing cups or utensils, with people who are sick.

We appreciate your collaboration to inform the public and prevent the spread of the Wuhan-linked novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV). I know that our combined efforts will effectively protect our communities and keep them healthy.

Sincerely,



Dr. Barbara Ferrer