



Goodhue County **Health and Human Services**

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For immediate release

We Can All Help - Calm – Basic, Individual and Community Actions

By: Goodhue County Health and Human Services

Goodhue County, MN (March 13, 2020) – When a novel (new) virus emerges, community mitigation or community level strategies are often the most readily available interventions to help slow transmission of the virus in communities. Community level strategies are a set of actions that persons and communities can take to help slow the spread of respiratory virus infections. There is currently no vaccine to prevent COVID-19; however, research is underway. Community mitigation is especially important before a vaccine or drug becomes widely available.

Minnesota Case Information

As of March 13, 2020 there have been over 550 patients tested in Minnesota with 14 positives tests. As of Friday March 13th 2020 Minnesota counties with cases are: Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Olmsted, Ramsey, Stearns and Wright.

The virus that causes COVID-19 is spread primarily by respiratory droplets when an infected person coughs or sneezes, similar to how influenza is spread. It can also spread when people touch surfaces that have been contaminated by an infected person and then touch their eyes, nose or mouth.

Goodhue County has not had a community member test positive for COVID-19. Goodhue County Health and Human Services is actively monitoring the spread of COVID-19 in Minnesota and neighboring Wisconsin. We are working with our local stakeholders and partners to ensure information on best practices are shared and questions/concerns are addressed.

As a community we all need to take actions to help reduce the chances of getting sick. This will reduce demands on the health care sector so the most seriously ill people get the supportive care they need. It is also important to acknowledge that many experts believe that COVID-19 is in other counties besides the eight mentioned above but has not been identified via testing yet. We should not be surprised when the amount of confirmed cases continue to rise as more testing taking place. This includes the likely hood of having confirmed cases here in Goodhue County.

Individual Actions

Health officials again stress the importance of all Minnesotans continuing to do those things that can limit the spread of the coronavirus.

- **Stay home and away from others if you are sick.**
- **Cover your coughs and sneezes** with your elbow or a tissue.
- **Wash your hands** frequently for 20 seconds with soap and water.
- **Avoid touching your face** throughout the day.

Staying home when sick is a fundamental "stop the spread" tip that can be particularly difficult to follow, either because people have no sick leave or they feel otherwise compelled to show up and tough it out. During an outbreak, MDH strongly encourage employees to reconsider going to work when sick. Staying home when sick protects not only other individual employees but also the larger workforce of an organization. One sick employee staying home may be an inconvenience, but an entire team of sick employees can become a far greater problem for the entire organization or business.

Community Level Strategies

Currently the Minnesota Department of Health has a broad set of recommendations for a variety of community level strategies. For the full set of recommendations go to the MDH Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) website <https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/action.html>. Key items on the list include:

- Event organizers cancelling or postponing gatherings with 250 or more people, including concerts, conferences, professional and amateur performances or sporting events.
- Event organizers cancelling or postponing smaller events (those with less than 250 people) that are held in settings that do not allow social distancing of 6 feet per person.
- Event organizers limiting attendance to no more than 10 people for events where the majority of participants are at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19.
- People and families at higher risk of severe COVID-19 illness staying at home and avoiding gatherings or other situations of potential exposures, including travel.
- Employers making telework arrangements for workers whose duties can be done remotely.
- Employers staggering work schedules and limiting non-essential work travel.
- Health care facilities and assisted-living facilities more strictly limiting visitors.
- Faith-based organizations offering video or audio events.
- Hospitals and other health care facilities implementing triage before entering facilities (for example, parking lot triage, phone triage, and telemedicine to limit unnecessary visits).

Where to go for Accurate Information

We know there is a lot of incorrect information going around about COVID-19. Don't believe everything you read or hear, even if someone says it's from a reliable source. Here are the best places to find accurate information:

- <https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/index.html?fbclid=IwAR1ZbkV9-HYkO29qjibrks8o8I83XSynYf7UeG4TKyok4iQtaseu3bD5cTY>
- <https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus?fbclid=IwAR1I0a4dW52uAL6MGoavHFjviBXbwe8mh3ahuAviBWT4OdWUfLFLoIHk8-U>
- https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html?fbclid=IwAR15QPzOOHL8BQHcE34O7EJMn9y_QyjCixF-v8svBiNe0K5NtHD31ZvQd-A

MDH has set up a COVID-19 public hotline that is open 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. The hotline number is 651-201-3920. For local information go to the Goodhue County Health and Human Services Facebook page @GCHHS and the Goodhue County Website <https://www.co.goodhue.mn.us/>.

About Goodhue County Health and Human Services:

The mission of Goodhue County Health and Human Services is to “Promote, Protect and Strengthen the Health of Individuals, Families, and Communities.” The department has four service divisions: Economic Assistance, Public Health, Social Services, and HHS Finance/IT. For more information on Goodhue County Health & Human Services, please visit www.co.goodhue.mn.us.

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