

NEWS RELEASE

Board approves \$500K for COVID-19 emergency preparedness response *Funding readies Oakland County for possible future local cases and the spread of illness*

March 5, 2020, OAKLAND COUNTY, MI. – Today, the Board of Commissioners unanimously approved funding to ensure that Oakland County is prepared for the spread of coronavirus, or COVID-19, a new respiratory virus that was first identified in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China in December 2019. The proposal is a preventative measure to ensure that Oakland County has the resources and tools necessary to address the outbreak of COVID-19.

The proposal is sponsored by Board Chairman **David T. Woodward** (D-Royal Oak). Funding will be allocated from Oakland County's Pandemic Response Assigned Fund Balance to Oakland County's Health Division for emergency preparedness.

"We want to make sure our public health department has the resources to do what needs to be done to protect us and manage the outbreak should it arrive here," Woodward said. "These dollars are necessary to ready our county for very serious sustained community spread, should it arrive. Public health is a top priority, and we stand ready to address health risk as this situation evolves."

COVID-19 has not been detected in Oakland County and there are a limited number of COVID-19 cases confirmed in the United States. Currently, in the United States, there is a low risk of COVID-19 infection to the general public. However, this is a rapidly evolving situation and the risk could change.

County Executive David Coulter recently formed the Oakland County Coronavirus Task Force to proactively coordinate and prepare for a possible outbreak locally. This includes developing educational information for prevention efforts and working collaboratively with Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, other local health departments, schools, hospitals, clinicians, businesses, and more to exchange up-to-date information and prepare for any disease control measures if the need arises.

“The action by the Board of Commissioners will ensure we are ready by boosting preparedness and prevention efforts which include collaborating with our community partners and keeping the public informed,” Coulter said.

The risk to individuals is dependent on exposure. For the general public, who are unlikely to be exposed to this virus, the immediate health risk from COVID-19 is considered low.

Health experts are still learning the details about how this new coronavirus spreads. Other respiratory illnesses are spread mainly via respiratory droplets of an infected person, through:

- The air when an infected person coughs or sneezes
- Touching a surface or object that has virus on it and then touching your mouth, nose, and/or eyes

There is not a vaccine or specific treatment recommended for COVID-19. People with COVID-19 can seek medical care to help relieve symptoms. People diagnosed with COVID-19 have reported mild to severe respiratory illness 2 to 14 days after exposure. Symptoms include:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

The best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to the virus. The simple everyday actions you can take to help prevent the spread of flu and the common cold will also help prevent the spread of coronaviruses. These include:

- Washing your hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds, and helping young children do the same – if soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Covering your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, then throwing the tissue in the trash
- Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands
- Avoiding close contact, such as kissing, sharing cups, or sharing eating utensils, with people who are sick
- Cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched surfaces, such as toys and doorknobs

For updated information about COVID-19 in Oakland County, visit www.oakgov.com/health. For health-related questions, contact the Health Division’s Nurse on Call at 800-848-5533 Monday to Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

For more information about the Board of Commissioners, visit www.oakgov.com/boc or call 248-858-0100.

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