

Klamath County Public Health

COVID-19 Press Conference

2 p.m. March 7, 2020

Jennifer Little, Director Klamath County Public Health

We have invited you here to announce that Klamath County has its first presumptive novel coronavirus case, also known as COVID-19.

Public Health understands that people are concerned about COVID-19 and is committed to sharing the latest information with our community so you can know how best to protect yourself, your family, and our community.

This case is directly related to travel exposure. It is not a case of community transmission.

Public Health values the rights of community members to enjoy total confidentiality regarding their medical information. So no identifiable information will be released about any Klamath County presumptive cases.

In the last three weeks, Klamath County Public Health has worked with our community partners to ensure a robust and effective response -- if and when coronavirus became present in Klamath County. This includes working directly with our schools, clinicians and numerous agencies to ensure coordination and communication well in advance of a presumptive case announcement.

As soon as the notification of a presumptive case was received, KCPH began working to identify all close contacts and made proper notification to include risk assessment. Contact investigation allows KCPH to ensure that those at risk are monitored for development of any signs or symptoms.

Contacts are monitored for 14 days following their last known exposure, and are cooperating fully at this time. There is no identified risk to the greater community in Klamath County, and there is no community spread at this time.

As testing becomes more widely available, we do anticipate the identification of additional cases.

To prioritize response for contact investigation and other measures for community protection, Public Health will not hold press conferences for future presumptive cases. Timely information about status of cases in Klamath County will be provided on the Public Health coronavirus update page.

Klamath County Public Health has activated its Incident Management Team to have dedicated staff and resources for this response. We continue to work with Oregon Health Authority, our healthcare systems, and community partners.

[Dr. Wendy Warren, Health Officer Klamath County Public Health](#)

COVID-19 is a new disease and we are still learning how it spreads, the severity of illness it causes, and to what extent it may spread in the United States.

We do know that older people who have other health conditions have greater risk of catching the virus.

The virus is thought to spread from person-to-person through close personal contact.

Close contact is considered being within 6 feet, with constant contact of more than an hour.

I would like to say again that this case is related to travel. This is not a case of community transmission.

There is no reason to be alarmed. The community is encouraged to continue the practices that reduce exposure to germs.

These include:

- Wash your hands frequently. Wash your hands for 20 seconds with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand rub. This will remove germs from your hands. In other words, wash like you just chopped up a jalapeno and need to remove your contact lenses.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a flexed elbow or tissue when coughing and sneezing. Throw away the used tissue immediately and wash your hands with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand rub. This way you protect others from any germs released through coughs and sneezes.
- Practice social distancing. If possible, keep a distance of six feet between yourself and someone who is coughing, sneezing or has a fever.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Hands touch many surfaces which can be contaminated with germs. If you touch your eyes, nose or mouth with your unclean hands, you can transfer the germs from the surface to yourself.
- If you have fever, cough AND difficulty breathing, seek medical care. Call ahead to schedule your visit to minimize exposing others to your germs.

Follow the guidance of your health care professional or public health advisories.

- Stay home if you are sick.

Sky Lakes Medical Center representative

The Sky Lakes system is working to ensure the community can safely obtain any health services they need.

Our team has been planning to ensure that proper precautions are in place to protect the health and safety of our community, patients, and employees.

We are participating in coordinated community planning efforts to follow the most up to date guidance as provided by CDC and Oregon Health Authority (OHA) to ensure minimal risk of exposure.

Clients can be assured that their health and safety at any Sky Lakes facility is a priority. .

Dr. Warren will address any questions