## *Columbus County*
### HEALTH DEPARTMENT
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Columbus County, NC –** The Columbus County Health Department (CCHD), along with the North Carolina Department of Public Health (NCDPH) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), are closely monitoring information on COVID-19 (Coronavirus Disease 2019).  CCHD continues to coordinate with local, regional, and state partners. The current risk of getting COVID-19 in Columbus County is still **LOW.**

*Due to the concerns of Columbus County residents, we would like to highlight the following:*

**What are the signs and symptoms of COVID-19?**

Symptoms are similar to other respiratory viruses. **If you have these symptoms, it does not necessarily mean you have this new virus!** Symptoms may include fever (may not always be present), cough, and shortness of breath or difficulty breathing. CDC believes at this time that symptoms of COVID-19 may appear in as few as 2 days or as long as 14 after exposure. While CDC has determined COVID-19 is a serious public health concern because of its community spread in other countries, the immediate health risk to the general American public is considered **low** at this time.

**Can someone who has had COVID-19 spread the illness to others?**

The virus that causes COVID-19 is spreading from person-to-person. Someone who is actively sick with COVID-19 can spread the illness to others. That is why CDC recommends that these patients be isolated either in the hospital or at home (depending on how sick they are) until they are better and no longer pose a risk of infecting others.

Someone who has completed quarantine or has been released from isolation does not pose a risk of infection to other people.

**How can I protect myself from COVID-19 and other viruses?**

- Stay informed by checking CDC's website and its social media pages for the most recent information
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap is unavailable
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick
- Stay home when you are sick
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, throw the tissue in the trash, and then wash your hands
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces

For additional preventative tips, visit CDC's Prevention and Treatment webpage.

Seek medical care if you feel sick with fever, cough, or difficulty breathing **AND** have traveled to affected geographic areas **OR** were in close contact with someone with COVID-19 in the 14 days before you began to feel sick. Call your doctor or urgent care BEFORE going; they will give you instructions and ask about your travel history and symptoms.

**Please continue to follow the guidelines provided by public health. Please help us spread FACTS not FEAR.**

Frequent communication with the public will be available through the NC Department of Health and Human Services website (https://www.ncdhhs.gov/divisions/public-health/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19-response-north-carolina).  The NC Department of Health and Human Services have also launched the NC COVID-19 Call Center to answer questions that Local Health Departments, clinicians, and the general public may have regarding COVID-19 (866-462-3821).

For more accurate updates and information about COVID-19, we also recommend using reputable sources such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the World Health Organization (WHO) websites – cdc.gov & who.int.  For more information from the Columbus County Health Department, please visit us on Facebook (Facebook.com/Columbuscountyhealth) or visit our website (Columbusco.org/Departments/Health-Department). For appointments or information, you can also reach the Columbus County Health Department by calling 910-640-6615.

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